

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN AUSTRALIA 1950-1990


Volume 1: Text

by

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To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution. Nor does it contain material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



GENOVAITE E. KAZOKAS

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CONTENTS

VOLUME 1: Text

AUTHOR'S NOTE	p. v
ABSTRACT	p. vi
PREFACE	p. viii
CHAPTER 1: Historical Background: Brief Outline of Lithuanian History from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries.	p. 1
CHAPTER 2: Cultural Background: Lithuanian Mythology, Language, Literature and Art.	p. 23
CHAPTER 3: Lithuanians in Australia	p. 54
CHAPTER 4: Lithuanians in Sydney	p. 73
CHAPTER 5: Lithuanians in Melbourne	p. 165
CHAPTER 6: Lithuanians in Adelaide	p. 254
CHAPTER 7: Lithuanians in Smaller Communities: Canberra, Newcastle, Tasmania, Perth, Ballarat, Brisbane, Beechworth, Wollongong.	p. 305
CHAPTER 8: Conclusion	p. 360
APPENDIX (select List of Artists' Exhibitions)	p. 375
BIBLIOGRAPHY	p. 393

VOLUME II: Illustrations

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I feel that the following explanations will facilitate the reading of this document:

1. A brief guide to the pronunciation of Lithuanian names is offered. Written Lithuanian is strictly phonetic with each letter of a word pronounced. However, to extend the range of sounds, the written form of the language includes the use of accent marks. Thus, š, č and ž are equivalent to the sounds in English of *sh* as in *ship*, *tch* as in *fetch* and *-ge* as in *orange* respectively. Accents placed above vowels indicate a lengthening in pronunciation while lower accents serve the same purpose and are also declension indicators.

2. The forms of Lithuanian surnames also require explanation. The language has retained its archaic differentiation in word endings for single and married women. Thus, surnames of married women end in *-ienė* and are derived from the male family name, e.g. *Giedraitis* - *Giedraitienė*; *Kepalas* - *Kepalienė*; *Simankevičius* - *Simankevičienė*. However, women's maiden names are diminutive forms of the male family name, e.g. *Giedraitis* - *Giedraitytė*; *Kepalas* - *Kepalaitė*; *Simankevičius* - *Simankevičiūtė*. It should be noted, however, that for simplification, most Lithuanian women in Australia use the male forms of their surnames.

3. The Lithuanian convention regarding capitalisation of compound titles requires that only the first word be capitalised, e.g. *Lietuvos aidas* (Echo of Lithuania). Exceptions are titles of particular significance or importance, e.g. *Lietuvių Tautinis Judėjimas* (National Lithuanian Movement). However, influenced by the conventions of English, many Lithuanians in the USA have adopted the capitalisation of all words of all titles. Throughout this thesis the inconsistency will be apparent since I have used the original forms of titles.

4. Readers will find throughout many references to Nature. Lithuanians generally, even distinctively, have a reverential attitude to nature. When this attitude is implied I refer to *Nature* rather than *nature*.

5. I have chosen to use the word *migrate* to indicate both *immigrate* and *emigrate*; *migration* is used for both *immigration* and *emigration*; and *migrant* indicates both *immigrant* and *emigrant*.

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents and discusses the life and work of 137 Lithuanian artists in Australia from 1950 to 1990. In order to provide a context for doing this, a panoramic view of the organizational and cultural activities of the general Lithuanian community in Australia is included. The thesis then attempts to give an account of the contributions made by Lithuanian artists to Australian visual art in graphic art, oil and watercolour painting, sculpture, portraiture, photography, ceramics and theatrical stage design.

There have been no previous studies of Lithuanian art in Australia and this material has been collected directly from the artists during interviews, by researching the Lithuanian and Australian press and catalogues and, in the case of deceased artists, by interviewing their relatives and friends. Many works in private Lithuanian collections around Australia have been photographed.

The thesis has seven chapters. The first gives an outline of Lithuanian history from the thirteenth century until World War II. The second chapter is concerned with Lithuanian cultural history and includes information about Lithuanian mythology, language and literature and the development of Lithuanian art. The third chapter describes the organization and development of cultural activities of Lithuanian communities in Australia. A comparison is made with longer-established Lithuanian communities in the USA. The final four chapters are concerned with the artistic activities of individual artists.

For ease of organization and comprehension, the thesis divides artists according to whether they are first- or second-generation Lithuanians in Australia. First-generation artists are subdivided into five groups with the terms 'Vanguard', 'Delayed', 'Latecomers', 'Folk Artists' and 'Community-Supporting Artists' used to distinguish among them. Second-generation artists are subdivided into two groups, 'Young Arrivals' and 'Australian-born'.

Some of the terms used require a brief explanation. 'Vanguard' are those first-generation artists who, when they arrived in Australia had already undergone extensive artistic training in Europe. In some cases, they were established artists. They generally began to pursue artistic activity almost immediately, even while carrying out re-settlement contractual obligations. Most were also active Lithuanian community members and the term 'Vanguard' seems a particularly apt title for this group of artists. 'Delayed' artists are those who, for various reasons, found it necessary to postpone artistic activity after their migration to Australia. Most had had professional art training in Europe but were

not able to engage in artistic activity to any degree for a considerable time after coming here.

Those classified as 'Latecomers' have generally taken up art at a later stage of their lives. Although art was often an interest from childhood, for most the opportunity to study and pursue art did not come until many years after their arrival in Australia.

The thesis further divides the artists and the Lithuanian communities on a geographic regional basis. Chapter 4 deals with Sydney, the largest Lithuanian population centre in Australia; subsequent chapters focus on Melbourne and Adelaide, while Chapter 7 describes a number of smaller Lithuanian communities and the Lithuanian artists who work there.

A number of distinctive Lithuanian characteristics and concerns are addressed as well as ways in which Lithuanian artists have spread their influence beyond the Lithuanian community.

PREFACE

In the years 1947 to 1951, following World War II, Australia received more than 170,000 European displaced persons who had fled their homelands to escape political and religious persecution. These refugees included approximately 35,000 persons from the three Baltic States: 5,500 from Estonia, 19,500 from Latvia and 10,000 from Lithuania.

Each national group brought distinctive cultures, customs, beliefs and ways of artistic expression which have contributed significantly to Australian ways of life. As time has passed, these various values, attitudes and social behaviours have tended to become merged with those of the host country and most are no longer easily identifiable in terms of ethnic origin.

There are, nevertheless, valid reasons for identifying and examining ways in which particular national groups have contributed to the cultural diversity of Australian society. It is important, too, that such studies be carried out before the wealth of oral information available becomes lost forever. The paucity of studies on Lithuanians in Australia was the stimulus for this thesis, the aim of which has been to document the artistic activity of one of the smallest migrant groups, the Lithuanians, from 1950 to 1990.

The term 'Lithuanian artist' is used throughout in a broad sense and applies to any person of Lithuanian descent who has produced works of art -- graphic art, oil or watercolour painting, sculpture, ceramics, art photography, theatrical decor, weaving or folkloric artefacts -- in Australia or, in exceptional cases, before arriving here. Included are highly qualified artists as well as a number without artistic training, and the study covers both professional and amateur art practitioners.

The author, herself a Lithuanian Australian, has gathered information in many ways, chief among them personal interviews. Other sources include letters, press cuttings, catalogues and historical documentation. The author's close involvement over many years with the Lithuanian community in Australia has included her role as the organizer of a number of Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Several Lithuanian publications have been of invaluable assistance. For many years, the author's late husband was editor of *Mūsų Pastogė*, the weekly Lithuanian newspaper published in Sydney. This enabled the author to gain many insights into the social and political life of the community. Other publications include *Australijos lietuvių metraštis*¹ (The Australian Lithuanian

¹ The Lithuanian term *metraštis* (chronicle) is somewhat misleading. It is not, as the Oxford Dictionary defines a chronicle, 'a continuous register of events in order of time' but rather, a compilation of illustrated reports, often undated and unacknowledged, about the activities of significant Lithuanian individuals, events and organizations in Australia. Its arrangement tends to be geographically localised rather than chronological. It nevertheless contains a wealth of

Chronicle, hereafter referred to as *Metraštis*) and *Australijos lietuvių 40 metų kultūrinė veikla* (Forty Years of Australian Lithuanian Cultural Activities, hereafter referred to as *40 metų*), both published in Australia. Two other particularly useful reference sources were the 37-volume, American-published *Lietuvių enciklopedija* (Lithuanian Encyclopedia) and the six-volume *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, published in English in the United States. The only Australian publication which deals specifically with Lithuanian art is *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, published in 1967. This contains thirty-one reproductions but has only three pages of detailed text.

Although the original intention was for this to be a study specifically of Lithuanian artists in Australia, the thesis has evolved into what might be regarded as an interdisciplinary document. It comprises two volumes: the first as outlined in the Abstract, the second a collection of 524 illustrations of artists' work. Since it was considered desirable to have more, rather than fewer, illustrations an unrealistically large second volume would have resulted. To overcome this, most works have been re-photographed to reduce them still further in size. In some cases, a slight deterioration in quality has resulted. Information accompanying the illustrations is as detailed and accurate as possible. Where details are not available it is generally because it has not been possible to trace the present location of some works.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

BRIEF OUTLINE OF LITHUANIAN HISTORY FROM THE THIRTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

*Lithuania, my fatherland, thou art like health;
How much we should value thee, he alone learns
Who has lost thee.*

Adomas Mickevičius (1798-1855)
(Translated from original Lithuanian)

The Balts

Because many early post-World War II refugees to Australia were selected from among Baltic displaced persons, subsequent migrants from other European countries were often called 'Balts'. The word, as well as being a geographical term, is a linguistic one. Used in the geographical sense, it denotes people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the three neighbouring states situated on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. (ills. 1 and 2) Used linguistically, it refers only to Lithuanians and Latvians, whose languages, unlike Estonian which is of Ugro-Finnish origin, derive from Sanskrit. Modern day Lithuanians are hybrids of Old European -- whose presence around 18000 B.C. is indicated by archaeological evidence¹ -- and Indo-European populations which migrated over a long period. The first Indo-Europeans reached the shores of the Baltic Sea around 3000 B.C.² Linguistic, archaeological and folkloric data indicate that the Indo-Europeans came from an area between the Caspian and Aral Seas. The tribes eventually settled between the Daugava and Vistula rivers. In about 500 B.C., Prussian,³ and in about 600 A.D. Latvian,⁴ tribes separated from the main Baltic trunk and became distinct groups. As the Lithuanians were agriculturists living away from the main waterways and were isolated from the rest of Europe by extensive forests and marshlands, they retained their language

¹ Marija Gimbutas, 'Lietuvos protoistorė' (Prehistory of Lithuania) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 269

² *ibid.*, p. 271

³ Antanas Salys, *Prūsai: tarmės* (Prussia Dialects), *ibid.* Vol. 24, p. 153

⁴ *ibid.* 'Latvija: tarmės' (Latvia Dialects), *ibid.* Vol. 14, p. 239

in its archaic form and it is now, in the twentieth century, the oldest extant Sanskrit-related language in Europe.

Early Lithuanian History

Lithuania came into recorded European history only in the 13th century A.D. when the Teutonic Order of the Knights of the Cross, founded in 1190, was no longer required for the Crusades to the Holy Lands and turned its attention to Lithuania, the last pagan country in Europe. At the same time as the Knights of the Cross declared a Holy War against Lithuania, another Germanic Teutonic Order, the Knights of the Sword, conquered the Latvian tribes around the Daugava River basin to the north of Lithuania. As a result Samogitia, the western region of Lithuania, was wedged between the two conquering Germanic Holy Orders. The struggle for Lithuanian survival and independence continued for the next 200 years. To the south, the Prussians, an indigenous Baltic tribe living in the region between the Vistula and Nemunas rivers, were attacked and, after fifty years of continuous fighting, were conquered by 1283 by the Germans who began to extinguish their language, colonised the region and established German Prussia.⁵ The German knights, who claimed to be the bearers of Christianity but who in reality coveted the strategically important Lithuanian territory, continued their attacks. Lithuanian tribes had been united under Grand Duke Mindaugas, a Lithuanian who had accepted Christianity in 1251 and as a consequence had been crowned King of Lithuania in 1253 on the recommendation of Pope Innocent IV.

During King Mindaugas's reign Lithuania's south-eastern region was home to many Byelorussians and included Slav duchies, among them the Minsk and Polotsk territories. By arranging marriages between his children and Russian nobility, Mindaugas was able to acquire some of these territories; this ploy was later developed into a diplomatic art by Grand Duke Gediminas. Following Mindaugas's death in 1263, there was a resumption of attacks by the Teutonic Knights and, disillusioned with Christianity, Lithuanian rulers over the next century allowed the country to return to paganism.

During the reign of Grand Duke Gediminas (1316-1341) the southern expansion of Lithuania reached the Dnieper and Bug rivers. Gediminas gave himself the title of 'Rex Lituanorum et Magnae Partis Ruthenorum' (King of Lithuania and a Large Part of Russia)⁶ and founded Vilnius as the capital of Lithuania. He was succeeded by his sons, Dukes Kestutis and Algirdas, whose diarchal reign lasted from 1345 to 1377. Although during that period, Lithuania

⁵ Zenonas Ivinskis, 'Prūsai: istorija', (History of Prussia), *ibid.* Vol. 24, p. 145

⁶ Owen T.C. Norem, *Timeless Lithuania*, Viltis, Cleveland, Ohio, 1967, p. 36

was geographically the largest state in Europe, within the empire Lithuanians were in a minority, being outnumbered by the Slav population. Nevertheless, Lithuania was able for several reasons to expand its territory: first, Lithuanians not only allowed to remain in place the local customs, religions and languages of those they conquered, but also intermarried with the indigenous people and gave their offspring vernacular names; second, they possessed superior arms and were better organized than the Slavs; third, Lithuanian rule was preferred to that of the cruel Tartars. Many duchies, including Pinsk, Kiev and Novgorod, sought Lithuanian protection and were annexed at their request.⁷

By the end of the reign of Grand Duke Vytautas (1392-1430), the son of Kestutis, most of western and southern Russia was under Lithuanian rule. (ill. 4) Vytautas extended the Lithuanian borders from the Baltic to the Black Sea and required the Tartar Khans to pay homage by imprinting his image on their coins.⁸ In ethnic Lithuania, the Teutonic Knights in the south continued their attempts to win uninterrupted access to the Baltic seacoast by uniting with the Knights of the Sword in the north. With military support from most of Christian Europe, they intensified their attacks on Lithuania and Poland, even though the latter was already a Christian country.

Grand Duke Vytautas and his cousin Jogaila, son of Algirdas, welcomed a Polish proposal to form a commonwealth in order to crush the Teutonic Order. To further strengthen the reciprocal bond, Poland proposed that Jogaila should marry the Polish princess Jadvyga (Hedwig) and be crowned king of a Lithuanian-Polish commonwealth. It was considered that the Teutonic Knights would be deprived of their reasons for attack if Lithuania, the last pagan country in Europe, was Christianised. In 1385 the Treaty of Kreva was signed, declaring a Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth rather than a Lithuanian-Polish one since Poland was already Catholic and presumably superior, even though Lithuania's territory was four times larger. It was agreed that there should be one king, but separate parliaments, armies, treasuries and laws.

In 1386, the 36-year-old Jogaila was baptised, married the 13-year-old princess Jadvyga and was crowned king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a token political gesture, King Jogaila and Grand Duke Vytautas rode through the countryside in the winter of 1387, 'baptising' the people and declaring Lithuania a Christian country.⁹ Although the people's beliefs were not changed, 'it was possible to announce to the world that Lithuania was now Christian and by attacking it the Holy Order would commit

⁷ *ibid.* p. 295

⁸ Joseph B. Končius, *Vytautas the Great: Grand Duke of Lithuania*. Franklin Press Inc., Miami, 1964, p. 112

⁹ They maintained that their acts of scattering holy water and the distribution of woollen shirts to those 'baptised' constituted the Christianisation of the country.

an offence.¹⁰ Polish and Czech priests were invited to take up residence in Lithuania and Catholicism became the official religion, exempt from all taxes and granted gifts of large estates with free labour provided.¹¹

However, the Teutonic Order continued its attacks. In 1410, Vytautas, supported by the prayers of King Jogaila, annihilated the German Knights of the Cross on their territory in a battle at Tannenberg.¹² After that time, only minor skirmishes occurred. In 1415, at a meeting at the Ecumenical Council at Constance in south-western Germany, a delegation of Lithuanians and Poles complained to the Pope about the belligerence of the German Knights. The outcome was that Christian Europe discontinued its support of the Order.

At the time, Lithuania was a monarchic state and Jogaila expected to be a powerful ruler of the Commonwealth which comprised united Lithuania, Poland and extensive Slav territories. However, Poland had begun the process of becoming an aristocratic republic with the parliamentary nobles exerting the right of *liberum veto*. Jogaila's role was reduced to that of mere ceremonial head and he lost influence in state matters and independence in private life.

Meantime, Grand Duke Vytautas continued his eastern expansionist policy and by the end of his reign Lithuanian territory had reached some 930,000 square kilometres, with 150 kilometres of Black Sea coastline, whereas the Baltic Sea coastline had been reduced to a mere 10 kilometres. Vytautas's leadership and his successful battles against the Tartars in Slav territories pleased the Poles and Germans who urged him to defend Europe from the Mongols.

In Vytautas's multi-racial empire, there was freedom of religion, making Lithuania in the 14th and 15th centuries the most tolerant country in Europe. Vytautas had both Catholic and Orthodox churches built, as well as synagogues for the Jewish population and mosques for the conquered Tartars. However, he was adamant that all native Lithuanians should be Christian, because he believed Christianity to be the country's best means of survival. To ensure this, he tolerated the continuation of the Jogaila-instigated privileges to the Catholic Church. In the predominantly Slav territories, Vytautas supported even the heretic Czechs, the Hussites, for whom he provided military assistance. This support, however, was seen by the Poles as undesirable, especially when, in 1430 at the age of eighty-four, Vytautas decided to break ties with the Polish parliament and crown himself King of Lithuania. The Poles were alarmed as they feared losing the vast Russian territories and access to the Black Sea. They hinted to the Holy See that the coronation was possibly a prelude to Vytautas's acceptance of the Orthodox faith. Pope Martin V threatened to excommunicate

¹⁰ A. Šapoka, *Lietuvos istorija* (History of Lithuania), Patria, Fellbach, 1950, p. 111

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 240

¹² Žalgirio mūšis: The Battle of Žalgiris (Tannenberg).

Vytautas and informed him that his coronation would be a 'sin against Christianity'.¹³ However, Vytautas had the support of Sigismund, the Holy Roman Emperor, and proposed as a bargain that he would discontinue his support of the Hussites in return for being crowned. The Pope refused.

In defiance of the Pope and the Poles, Vytautas set the date of his coronation for September, 1430, but the crown, sent from Emperor Sigismund, was seized by Polish military forces. Although a second coronation date was set, Vytautas died under suspicious circumstances before the day arrived.

Many historians regard Vytautas as the most successful ruler of Lithuania because of his astute foreign policy, his great tolerance in his dealings with foreign territories and his success in converting Lithuanians to Christianity. He is remembered, too, for his invigoration of Lithuanian commerce: at a time when most European countries were expelling Jews, Vytautas invited them to set up as traders.

Lithuanians remember him as Vytautas the Great, particularly for his bold manipulation of political and religious issues in his efforts to extricate Lithuania from Polish domination. It had not been seen, however, that Christianity and the Commonwealth with Poland would open the door to the Polonisation of Lithuania. The privileges afforded the Catholic Church not only began to negate the principle of tolerance but also laid the basis for serfdom. Catholicism became the major vehicle for Polonisation since the faith was taught only in the Polish language. In return for accepting the predominance of their language and their customs, the Polish aristocracy offered to the Lithuanian nobility titles, privileges, access to education and influential positions. This strategy proved very effective and by the 17th century most upper-class Lithuanians had been successfully Polonised and described themselves as 'gente Lituanus natione Polonus' (Lithuanians by birth, Poles by statehood).¹⁴ Most felt closer ties with the Polish nobility than with their own people.

With increased Polonisation, the importance of Poland was emphasised and the rights of Lithuania progressively ignored. Disillusioned Lithuanians began to elect their own kings; in order to maintain the integrity of the union, the Poles re-elected them as kings of the Commonwealth. Thus, for almost 200 years, there were kings of Lithuanian stock, although power remained with the Polish parliament.¹⁵

In the 16th century a group of Lithuanian nobles, fearing an imminent Polish takeover of the country, decided to resist legally by drafting and proclaiming a Lithuanian Statute in 1529. It was at that time the only codified

¹³ Končius, *Vytautas the Great*, p. 181.

¹⁴ Konstantinas Avižonis, 'Lenkinimas' (Polonisation) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 14, p. 438

¹⁵ Jack T. Stukas, *Awakening Lithuania*, The Florham Park Press, Madison, 1966, p. 14

secular law in Eastern Europe. The Statute, parts of which remained valid for the next 260 years, consisted of thirteen chapters and was designed to protect the independence of Lithuania and to prevent Polish acquisition of Lithuanian land, especially by marriage dowries. It granted freedom of religion to all and emphasised that no preference was to be accorded one religious denomination over another. In one section it outlined the rights of women with particular reference to the protection of the status and property of widows and brides.

In 1579, the University of Vilnius was founded so that the aristocracy need no longer go abroad to study. Over the next two centuries, the Duchy of Moscow increased in strength and annexed the Slav provinces one by one. At the same time, the Polish government misused its parliamentary rights, neglecting state affairs and the defence of its country. As a result, in 1772 Russia, in an alliance with Austria and German Prussia, partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Further partitions occurred in 1793 and 1795. Lithuania became no more than a small Russian province and Lithuanians were severely exploited: taxes levied on their assets and produce were five times higher than in Russia and twice as much as in Poland.¹⁶

In 1794, a recruiting system was imposed on Lithuanians, requiring many to give lifetime military service. There was an intensive campaign to annihilate the Lithuanian language and educational provision was extremely poor. For many men, the only escape from military conscription, dire poverty and persecution was to migrate to America where, gradually, Lithuanian 'colonies' were established.

The ideals of the American and French revolutions, declaring liberty, fraternity and equality for all people eventually reached the oppressed folk in Lithuania and were the catalyst for unsuccessful uprisings against Russia in 1831 and 1863. Following the first insurgency, the University of Vilnius and all Lithuanian schools were closed in 1832 and in 1840 the Lithuanian Statute was repealed. In 1864, after the second uprising, prohibition of the Lithuanian press was declared, threatening severe punishment to anyone printing, reading or possessing any Lithuanian publication using the Latin alphabet. Lithuanian societies were repressed, large gatherings disallowed and the name 'Lithuania' forbidden and replaced by the term 'Northwestern Land'. These impositions caused an unprecedented reaction. Very many people showed their defiance and during this time a number of clandestine schools sprang up in homes in country areas; peasant children were taught the basics of Lithuanian literacy there. Books in Lithuanian were produced in several other countries and smuggled into Lithuania by men devoted to the preservation of ethnic culture.

¹⁶ Šapoka, *Lietuvos istorija*, p. 442

The prohibitions and punishments had the effect of arousing Lithuanian national consciousness and giving the people a sense of solidarity and hope. This changing emotional climate encouraged the oppressed peasants to make bolder demands and led to the abolition of serfdom in 1861.¹⁷ As a result, many landless farmers, unable to find agricultural work in Lithuania and unwilling to serve in the Russian army, migrated to America or to neighbouring European countries. The majority of peasants, however, remained in their homeland and eventually acquired legal title to their former serf landholdings. Many emphasised to their children the importance of gaining an education and a generation later Lithuania had its first educated people of peasant stock.

During the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, there was an acceleration of colonisation by Russia and a resurgence of the influence by the Russian Orthodox Church in Lithuania. In the second half of the nineteenth century, allied with the spirit of insurrection, a wave of Romanticism belatedly reached Lithuania: this was evident in renewed respect for the national language, in idealisation of peasant life and in admiration of the glory of past times. Young intellectuals responded by forming what historians have since described as the Lithuanian Movement with the specific aim of reviving the old language which was alive only among the most conservative section of the population, the peasants. In 1883, Dr. Jonas Basanavicius published the first Lithuanian newspaper, *Aušra* (Dawn) in East Prussia; this stimulated the awakening of Lithuanian national awareness among the educated, Polonised and Russified people. In 1889 Dr. Vincas Kudirka established the *Varpas* (Bell) newspaper which highlighted social and political problems and, for the first time, the notion of an independent, democratic Lithuania. At that time, however, independence was regarded as unrealistic by many contemporary nationals.

As Russian political and military power waned in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Russia became more lenient in administration and previous prohibitions were lifted. This not only freed the Lithuanian press but also allowed public gatherings, with the result that numerous choirs, theatre groups and charitable societies were able to be formed. These and many other activities served to foster Lithuanian culture and national ideals. In 1905, the establishment of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) in Vilnius was a major event.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Lithuania again became a battlefield, this time for the Russian and German armies. By 1915, Germany had complete control of Lithuania. The Lithuanian National Movement concentrated its attention on political issues and monitored carefully the

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 467.

changing military situation. In Vilnius, the Lietuvos Taryba (Council of Lithuania) was formed with twenty members representing a number of political parties.

The Birth of Independent Lithuania

On 16 February 1918, the Council of Lithuania declared the restoration of Lithuania as an independent, democratic republic within its ethnographic territories and with Vilnius as capital. Total nullification of historical and current ties of subordination to other countries was decreed. The first elected president was Antanas Smetona, a member of the National Party. The first government to acknowledge Lithuania as independent was Germany whose military remnants were still in Lithuania. Germany knew that a small buffer state would be a safer neighbour than the Russian Empire, and a peace treaty was signed by Lithuania and Germany in March 1918. However, Lithuania was forced to continue its fight for freedom because the Russian Bolshevik government tried to regain former imperial territories. Peasant groups, hastily organized by local Lithuanian leaders and armed with home-made as well as abandoned German weapons, pushed the Bolsheviks out of Lithuania. Almost immediately the Poles, in an endeavour to re-establish the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, invaded Lithuania. Battles were waged until a peace treaty was signed at Suvalkai (Suwalki) on 7 October 1920. Two days later, the Poles violated the treaty and troops under the command of General Lucjan Żeligowski occupied Vilnius and the neighbouring region of 32,441 square kilometres with its population of 1.4 million.¹⁸ In spite of an order by the League of Nations to return the Lithuanian capital and its surrounds, the Poles remained in Vilnius and about one-third of Lithuania's territory was lost to Poland. As a result, Kaunas was until 1939 Lithuania's temporary capital and Lithuania severed diplomatic ties with Poland. A peace treaty between Soviet Russia and Lithuania was signed in 1920 and in September 1921, Lithuania was accepted as a member of the League of Nations.¹⁹

Early Difficulties: After its 1918 declaration of independence, Lithuania found itself the poorest and most deprived of the three Baltic states. Because of its geographical position, it had experienced heavy casualties in battles waged on its soil by Russia and Germany. Four hundred years of Polish influence and over a hundred years of Russian occupation had had a devastating effect on

¹⁸ Kazys Pakštas, 'Lietuvos valstybės plotai ir sienos' (Lithuanian Land and Borders) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 462

¹⁹ Domas Krivickas, 'Lietuvos užsienio politika' (Foreign Policy of Lithuania) *ibid.*, p. 347

Lithuania's cultural life and on the people's psyche. The myth that Poland was the only bridge to Western European culture had been successfully implanted in the minds of Lithuanian gentry and had persisted until the second half of the nineteenth century. Deprived of its capital, the country now comprised only 55,670 square kilometres. A census in 1923 showed that the total population was 2,029,000, 84.2% of whom were Lithuanians, 7.6% Jews, 3.2% Poles, 2.5% Russians with the remainder made up of other minority groups.²⁰ At about the same time, Latvians in Latvia formed some 75.5%,²¹ and Estonians in Estonia about 88%²² of their respective total populations.

The standard of education in Lithuania was the lowest of the Baltic states: while illiteracy had been almost eradicated in Estonia in the 19th century, and in Latvia was as low as 11% at the beginning of the 20th century, in Lithuania it was as high as 30% at the beginning of World War I.²³ Illiteracy in Lithuania was due to several factors: Polonisation had successfully claimed most of the educated upper classes so that the talents of this elite group tended to be dispersed among and merged with the Polish aristocracy; the Russification of Lithuania and the resulting closure of educational institutions had adversely affected the education of peasant children; the repression of a free press and the delayed abolition of serfdom, were all factors that played a major role in hindering cultural progress. Under such dismal circumstances Lithuania began its economic and cultural recovery.

Towards Economic Recovery: In 1918, Lithuania was a state without a budget. At times, the financial situation was so desperate that teachers, clerks and other government employees often worked several months without salary.²⁴ The German government agreed to grant financial loans and Lithuanians in the

²⁰ Antanas Bendorius, 'Gyventojai' (Population) *ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 57

²¹ Benediktas V. Mačiuka, 'Latvija: gyventojai' (Latvia: Population) *ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 217

²² Bendorius, 'Eesti: gyventojai' (Estonia: Population) *ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 54

²³ To put this in perspective, the illiteracy rate at that time in Poland was 50% and in Russia 75% (*Novosti Press Agency Yearbook*, Moscow, 1976, p. 99).

²⁴ The following illustrates the severity of the financial situation at that time: In December 1919, Finance Minister Martynas Yčas applied to the Tilden Smidt and Gordon Banks in London for a 200,000 - 300,000 pounds stg loan. Their envoy, a Mr Fortington, went to Lithuania to investigate the application and found the government's budget in deficit and employees unpaid for up to four months. Mr Fortington was surprised when Martynas Yčas appraised the situation as 'very strong and firm'. Yčas elucidated further: 'What would happen in large countries -- France or Great Britain -- if employees and the army would not be paid for two months? ... but here nobody strikes and this proves that the people believe in their government and work not so much for the money, but more from dedication, feeling a moral obligation to their country ... If you want to receive flax ... you should pay our government 200,000 or 300,000 pounds stg in advance, otherwise it will be too late. We won't have a state, and you won't have any flax'. The loan was received forthwith. P. Klimas, *Pirmasis nepriklausomos Lietuvos dešimtmetis 1918-1928* (The First Decade of Independent Lithuania), Nida Press, London, 1955, pp. 123-127.

USA gave additional support to the commencement of the building of a new state.

Two matters of utmost importance -- land reform and education -- received priority consideration and action. In 1922, the Land Reform Bill was passed. Estates larger than eighty hectares which had previously belonged to the Polish upper classes, the Russian administration or the Church were requisitioned. These properties comprised some 40% of total arable land. The former owners were compensated by instalment and the land allocated to poor or landless peasants as well as to those who had been savanoriai (volunteer independence fighters). In all, 39,000 new land-holdings were created. Most farms were now quite small, as illustrated by the following table:²⁵

<u>Size of farm</u>	<u>No. of farms</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Area (ha.)</u>	<u>% of total</u>
1-5 ha.	53,463	18.60	154,076	3.57
5-10 ha.	78,237	27.23	582,897	13.49
10-20 ha.	92,808	32.29	1,293,656	29.96
20-30 ha.	34,197	11.90	826,593	19.14
30-50 ha.	20,597	7.17	762,894	17.67
over 50 ha.	8,078	2.81	698,398	16.10
Total	287,380	100.00	4,318,514	100.00

The relatively uniform pattern of ownership of small farms was effective in greatly diminishing class distinction. Abolition of serfdom in 1861 had left all peasants free, but many without land. In 1922 Land Reform laws allowed an approach to true equality among the rural population (88% of Lithuania's total population). Furthermore, it provided stability to the agriculture-based economy, later enabling Lithuania's currency to remain firm during the world depression of the early 1930s.

The main farming activity was the production of grain, dairy produce, flax and livestock. Until about 1920, commerce and banking were largely in Jewish hands, but in 1923 several large co-operatives were established, with the aim of increasing production and organizing an export trade. Chief exports were dairy produce (20.8%), meat products (15.5%) and cereals (11.6%). Most went to Great Britain (39.4%) and Germany (26.8%).²⁶

In 1919, laws regulating the relationship of workers and employers, basic wage principles and accident and job-loss insurance were implemented.

²⁵ Jonas Paltarokas, 'Žemės ūkis' (Agriculture) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 182

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 191. No figures are available for flax, but it was an important export.

An eight-hour working day and a forty-eight hour working week were also introduced at that time.²⁷ Later, in 1926, health insurance was also made available to all through a state-backed health fund, *Ligonių Kasa*, which provided free medical and dental services.²⁸ Between 1919 and 1923, five Lithuanian banks were established and loan interest rates, previously as high as 48%, were reduced by law in 1922 to 7-8% and in 1938 to 5%. In 1922, Lithuania introduced its own monetary unit to replace foreign currency. The new monetary unit, the *litas*, was divided into one hundred cents. It remained stable throughout the period of Lithuania's independence.

Education in Independent Lithuania: Serious attention and high priority were given to education right from the beginning of independence. The existing, previously clandestine, national schools were legalised and more were quickly established by the Ministry of Education. Schools were obliged not only to provide students with knowledge of subjects, but to guide them in matters of ethics, tolerance and humanitarianism. The increase in primary education from 1913 to 1940 is shown in the following table:²⁹

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Schools</u>	<u>No. of Teachers</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>
1913	875	1,022	51,221
1923	1,849	2,483	117,466
1938	2,319	5,110	283,773
1940	2,743	6,944	341,299

In the period from 1920 to 1935 the secondary school situation was as follows:³⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>
1920	40	9,078
1925	115	23,542
1935	107	20,462

²⁷ Jonas Paplėnas, 'Darbo apsauga ir socialinis aprūpinimas' (Labour Protection and Social Service) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 257

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ Vaclovas Čižiūnas and Simas Sužiedėlis, 'Švietimas Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje' (Education in Independent Lithuania) *ibid*, p. 770

³⁰ *ibid*, p. 773

In 1922, compulsory primary education of four years was introduced. At that time, secondary education generally comprised eight years at *gimnazija* (secondary school), although there were also secondary schools, called *progimnazija*, which offered only four years of tuition. The secondary curriculum included some sixteen subjects with a strong emphasis on languages and literature. In most secondary schools Latin was compulsory as well as two foreign languages selected by personal choice, the most popular in order being French, German and English. Russian and Polish were not included as these were familiar to even the youngest children and, in any case, a feeling of resentment towards Russia and Poland lingered.

In 1936, education reforms were implemented, increasing compulsory primary schooling to six years and decreasing secondary to seven. The prerequisite for university entrance was now thirteen years of schooling. The Department of Education assisted minority groups by establishing foreign schools. By 1936 there were 108 primary and 60 secondary Jewish schools. According to one Jewish historian, Lithuania 'acquired [a] reputation among Jews as the Second Erez Israel.'³¹ There were also three Polish secondary schools as well as one Russian and one German. All running costs, including the salaries of teachers, were met by the State. A number of private schools also operated during this time. After losing Vilnius to Poland, Lithuania in 1922 established a new university in Kaunas. It was at first called the University of Lithuania, but in 1930 was renamed the University of Vytautas the Great.³² It had six faculties: theology-philosophy, arts, law, mathematics and science, medicine and engineering. In 1932 student enrolment was about 4,500. Specific schools and academies were also established: a School of Art which was set up in 1922 developed from courses commenced in 1920; an Agricultural Academy began in 1924; a Conservatorium of Music opened in 1933; an Institute of Commerce began in 1934; and in 1935 and 1936 respectively a Teachers College and a Veterinary Institute commenced.³³

Expansion of Cultural Activities: A great many Lithuanians were now seized by an organizational fervour. In addition to the formal educational system, thousands of small study groups (*rateliai*), headed by instructors, sprang up in villages throughout the country. These were designed to promote and extend practical knowledge of farming, especially animal husbandry, dairy

³¹ Joseph Gar, 'Lithuania' in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Keter Publishing House Ltd., Jerusalem, 1971, Vol. 11, p. 381.

³² Čižiūnas and Sužiedėlis, 'Švietimas Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje' (Education in Independent Lithuania) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, pp. 190-191.

³³ *ibid*

production, the manufacture of wild-berry wines and juices. apiculture and so on.

Arts groups also became popular and aimed to revive and foster folk-art traditions, both oral and visual, and to encourage self-expression through choral and theatrical involvement. These groups were usually led by teachers, professional musicians or artistically inclined lay enthusiasts. The most popular collective pastime was choral singing which from 1924 was celebrated in grand Song Festivals (*Dainų Šventė*) with Lithuanian folk songs performed by massed choirs. In 1924, eighty choirs with a total of 3,000 singers took part; by 1930 the number had increased to 200 choirs with a total of 9,000 choristers.³⁴ Lithuanian urban cultural life, up to 1918 practically non-existent, also began to flourish. The main area of activity was the theatre: drama, opera and ballet. While previously, theatrical performances had been forbidden and had occurred only illicitly in village barns and halls, from 1904 the theatre became a vehicle for patriotic expression and for the dissemination of ideas about the possibilities of national independence. In 1920, even though cannons still thundered, the first opera performance in Kaunas, of *La Traviata* by Verdi, took place.³⁵

Opera, drama and ballet theatres were maintained by the State and fostered as educational institutions. Most primary and secondary school classes were taken to the theatre at least once each year. Accessibility was made possible for all students by having very low admission charges. Visiting performers and conductors from the West gave high praise to Lithuanian opera and ballet.³⁶

World War II and Lithuania

By 1939, Lithuania had made substantial economic and cultural progress. Land reforms had ensured that there was neither poverty nor private concentration of wealth. Farming practices employed modern agricultural methods and high-quality produce was being exported: by 1937 Lithuania was the world's sixth largest exporter of butter and ranked third in the world as an exporter of flax.³⁷

Educational achievements were likewise considerable. The introduction of compulsory education had practically eradicated illiteracy and had made schooling accessible across the country. For the first time in over half a century tertiary education could be gained without the necessity of travelling abroad.

³⁴ Juozas Žilėvičius, 'Dainų šventės' (Song Festivals), *ibid*, Vol. 4, p. 241

³⁵ Stasys Santvaras, 'Lietuvos opera' (Opera in Lithuania), *ibid*, Vol. 15, p. 677

³⁶ Liūdas Trukys, 'Prisiminimai' (Reminiscences) in *Kultūros barai*, No. 11, 1968, p. 39

³⁷ Paltarokas, 'Žemės ūkis' (Agriculture) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, pp. 190-191

Cultural, diplomatic and economic ties had been formed with most European nations.

All this was to change with the outbreak of World War II. In 1938 Nazi Germany annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia and in 1939 took Lithuania's only seaport, Klaipėda, and territory measuring 2,848 square kilometres. At the same time the Germans, aware of the long-held Lithuanian resentment over the 1920 loss of its capital, Vilnius, proposed military assistance to retrieve Vilnius from Poland.³⁸ Lithuania declined the offer and declared itself neutral. A month later, in August 1939, a secret pact was signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop, the then Ministers for Foreign Affairs of, respectively, the Soviet Union and Germany.³⁹ The pact divided the Baltic States and Poland into 'spheres of influence'. The Baltic countries were assigned to Russia.

In October 1939, Lithuania was coerced by the Soviet Union to sign a 'mutual assistance pact'⁴⁰ to allow Red Army bases and about 20,000 Russian soldiers on to Lithuanian territory. In return, the Soviet Union returned Vilnius and some of the adjacent territory to Lithuania. On 15 June 1940, the Soviets invaded Lithuania. Although shocked, the people remained calm and continued their jobs and regular activities. After two weeks' occupation, an election for a Soviet parliament was announced. A single list containing only Communist candidates was presented. As Lithuanians were reluctant to participate in such an undemocratic ballot the election date was postponed for one day. However, history records that 'the Soviet Embassy in London was not informed of this extension and, fully 24 hours before the closing of the 'polls', announced that 95.51% of all eligible voters had cast their ballots - this was the pre-arranged percentage of 'voting' which had been agreed upon in the Kremlin.'⁴¹ Soon all of the 6,600 branches of numerous organizations⁴² established during Lithuania's period of independence were closed, their leaders arrested and property confiscated. The activities of the Catholic Church were severely curtailed: 15.9% of churches were seized and many clergy and believers persecuted.⁴³ These occurrences profoundly shocked most people, all the more so as the Catholic Church had enjoyed a privileged position since the introduction of Christianity in 1387. Churches were now the only meeting places available and their pulpits the only places for public address.

³⁸ Juozas Jakštas, 'Nepriklausomybės laikai' (Time of Independence) *ibid.* p. 343

³⁹ The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact became public only in 1946 during the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals. Juozas Brazaitis, 'Pirmoji sovietinė okupacija 1940-1941' (The First Soviet Occupation 1940-1941) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 357

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ K. Pakštas, *Lithuania and World War II*, Lithuanian Cultural Institute, Chicago, 1947, p.

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⁴² *ibid.*, p. 42

⁴³ Juozas Vaišnora, 'Katalikų bažnyčia Lietuvoje' (The Catholic Church in Lithuania) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 150

In schools, traditional religious education was replaced by compulsory teaching of Marxism-Leninism, now deemed to be the most important subject in the curriculum. Teachers, writers and actors were compelled to undertake special re-education courses. In preparation for total collectivization of farms (and, Lithuanians feared, for future Russian colonisation, although both were strongly denied at the time by the Soviets) the Soviet administration weakened national resistance by arrests and deportations. In the first year of Soviet occupation Lithuania's military and police forces were either incorporated into the Red Army or disbanded and their high-ranking officers arrested.

All privately owned land of more than thirty hectares was confiscated. Farmers with small holdings had high taxes levied on their produce, making it impossible for them to exist. Approximately 17% of such farmers simply abandoned their farms.⁴⁴ Banks, factories and industrial enterprises employing more than twenty workers were nationalised, as were private homes in excess of 220 square metres or, in smaller towns, in excess of 170 square metres.⁴⁵ School curricula and text books were changed to conform to the 'right ideology'. Theatrical plays and concerts were censored and restricted. Above all, any criticism, lack of outward enthusiasm or social, cultural or political activity might at any time become a ticket to Siberia. Terror gripped people at all levels of society.

Between 14 and 20 June 1941, deportations on a massive scale took place simultaneously in the three Baltic states: approximately 100,000 people, among them 35,000 from Lithuania, were deported to Siberia.⁴⁶ Deportees included people from all walks of life. 'These deportations were the most traumatic single experience of the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. It was bound to turn the population violently and even recklessly against the Soviet rule. As a consequence, the news of the outbreak of German-Soviet hostilities on June 22 was received with a sigh of relief.'⁴⁷

Under such conditions, even the arrival of the German Army seemed like salvation. On 22 June 1941, the Lithuanian underground organization, seeing the first signs of conflict, immediately seized the radio station. Professor Kazys Pakštas describes the events that followed:

As soon as the radio announced the news of the new Russo-German war ... all of Lithuania rose up in arms. Six thousand Lithuanian soldiers who had been 'incorporated' into the Red Army, 35,000

⁴⁴ Domas Krivickas 'Sovietization of Lithuania' in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, Vol. 5, p. 541
⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ Tomas Rimašauskas, 'Genocidas' (Genocide) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 7, pp. 139-141

⁴⁷ V.S. Vardys and R.J. Misiūnas, editors, *The Baltic States in Peace and War 1917-1945*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, p. 13

organized partisans and 90,000 unorganized and practically unarmed guerillas -- a total of 131,000 men -- joined in the insurrection.⁴⁸

It is estimated that about 4,000 lives were lost, half of them in open combat with the Soviets.⁴⁹ The Germans invaded a Lithuania almost free of Soviets. Members of the Lithuanian underground organization, with Professor Juozas Ambrazevičius at its head, formed a Provisional Lithuanian Government.⁵⁰ Although it was tolerated by the Nazis for only six weeks, it succeeded in establishing a reliable regional administrative apparatus and in restoring the former educational system which, later, was left partially intact by the Germans. After six weeks the Nazis, convinced that they would soon gain victory, denounced the Provisional Lithuanian Government and any form of independent Lithuania. They proposed, however, that the Lithuanian Cabinet should remain as an 'advisory body.' The Lithuanian ministers completely rejected such a notion and resigned *en bloc*.⁵¹ From then on, the Lithuanian Provisional Government became an underground organization.

During the German occupation, Lithuania was renamed 'Generalbezirk Litauen' (General District of Lithuania) and German civil administration -- Zivilverwaltung -- was established. However, the lower administration apparatus was left partially in the hands of Lithuanian councillors, subordinate to the German General Commissariat in Kaunas. The Soviet-implemented, communist-style nationalisation was maintained and used by the Nazis for their purposes: high taxes were levied on agricultural products and factories, operating under Nazi managers, were turned over to the production of goods for German requirements.

The Germans demanded also the formation of a Lithuanian SS Battalion as well as the dispatch of 100,000 men for compulsory work (Arbeitsdienst) in Germany. When these demands were not met, enforcement and reprisals were implemented: German press gangs began to operate on the streets and in other gathering places; tertiary educational institutions were closed; forty-six academics, the first of many, were banished to Stutthof concentration camp as hostages.⁵²

During the three years of German occupation, approximately 29,000 Lithuanians were sent to various concentration camps where more than 6,000 met their deaths.⁵³

⁴⁸ Pakštas, *Lithuania and World War II*, p. 35

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Laikinoji Lietuvos Vyriausybė

⁵¹ N.E.Sūduvis, *Vieni vieni* (All Alone), I Laisvės fondas, Brooklyn, USA, 1964, pp. 95-99

⁵² Juozas Brazaitis, 'Vokiečių okupacija 1941-1944' (German Occupation 1941-1944) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 376

⁵³ Simas Sužiedėlis, 'The Second World War' in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, Vol. 5, p. 425

On 14 August 1941, the British Broadcasting Corporation announced the signing of the Atlantic Charter by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Sections of the document seemed to be designed specifically for the Baltic states, e.g. paragraph 6, which reads:

After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they⁵⁴ hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.⁵⁵

Lithuanian underground leaders believed that this was meant as a Western reassurance to Baltic peoples in their resistance to totalitarian regimes. N.E. Suduvis, a member of the underground movement, reflects: 'The belief in the Atlantic Charter maintained the hopes of the resistance not only against the Nazi occupation but against the Soviets as well. Because of the Atlantic Charter, the leaders of the resistance formed an illusion that it was necessary to withstand for only a few months.'⁵⁶ Hope quickly spread throughout clandestine organisations by way of the underground press and by word of mouth. Soon many people believed from such 'reliable sources' that the Western powers were on their side. But the leaders of the Lithuanian resistance had overlooked the fact that the Atlantic Charter was not a treaty, merely an Anglo-American 'statement of principles'. 'Although not an official document [it] was employed effectively as a propaganda weapon against the axis powers during World War II.'⁵⁷ The Lithuanians successfully resisted continued pressure by the Nazis to form an SS legion, many hiding to avoid mobilisation to the German Army or deportation for enforced labour in Germany. Forests became refuges for an ever-increasing number of youths in hiding.

From 1943 the Nazis suffered setbacks on the Eastern Front and were ready to compromise. They agreed to the formation of a Lithuanian militia strictly for the defence of Lithuania's border. On 16 February 1944 -- Lithuania's National Day -- General Povilas Plechavičius announced by radio the organization of Lithuanian Self-Defence Forces which were to be used only in the event of a second Soviet invasion of Lithuanian territory and which would be under Lithuanian command. To the great astonishment of the Germans, about 19,500 men registered within a few days.⁵⁸ As soon as their training was completed, it was announced by the Germans that these Self-

⁵⁴ They, i.e. Western democracies.

⁵⁵ 'Atlantic Charter', in *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 2, p. 618

⁵⁶ Suduvis, *Vienų vieni*, p. 370

⁵⁷ *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 2, p. 618

⁵⁸ K. Ališauskas, 'Vietnė rinkinė' (Self-Defence Forces) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. Vol. 34, p. 39

Defence Forces were destined not for the internal defence of Lithuania, but for the Russian front. In the ensuing Lithuanian-German skirmishes most of the young Lithuanian soldiers escaped back to the forests. Later, they formed the nucleus of the Freedom Fighters numbering about 30,000 who, after the second Soviet occupation of Lithuania fought the Russian regime until, by 1954, they had been totally exterminated.

In May 1944, General Plechavičius and his staff were arrested by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp. A month later, the Soviets re-invaded Lithuania. In contrast to the first Russian invasion, the second was preceded by a mass exodus of Lithuanians to the West, ironically through Nazi Germany, the only available escape route. In spite of three years resistance to Nazi domination, about 80,000 people chose to flee from the Russians to the hostile, impoverished and devastated Germany. They took with them, however, a firm conviction that imminent return to their home-land was certain.

After World War II

Displaced Persons: At the end of World War II about one million refugees, from Soviet-occupied countries and called 'displaced persons' (DPs), found themselves stranded in Western Germany and Austria. Among them were 200,000 people from the Baltic nations, of whom 60,000 to 65,000 were Lithuanians.⁵⁹ Most were recent refugees but a number were deportees who had been captured during the German occupation and forced to work in Germany.

Western Germany had been divided into American, British and French administrative zones in which conditions of accommodation and nutrition varied. In the American zone, occupying the most westerly part, large refugee camps were established, frequently in old military barracks. Refugees were usually grouped according to their nationality. Some camps, such as Hanau, Hamburg and Lubeck in the American zone, housed up to 4,000 Lithuanians.

From 1945, refugees were supported by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration); from 1947 by IRO (International Refugee Organization). All refugees were declared stateless and their passports became invalid. They had no civil rights and their movements for the first two years were restricted. One criterion for grouping refugees became clear when the resolutions passed at the Yalta Conference, held from February 4 to 11 in 1945, became publicly known: the Allied leaders agreed to repatriate 'all Soviet citizens from enemy territory'.⁶⁰ Because the Baltic states were occupied by the Soviet Union, the Allies regarded all Baltic people as Soviet citizens. The

⁵⁹ Vytautas Alseika, 'D.P.', *ibid.*, Vol. 5, pp. 147-8

⁶⁰ Sužiedėlis, 'Yalta Conference' in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, Vol. 6, p. 272

UNRRA was eager to return refugees to their countries of origin and 'a secret UNRRA document (1946) states that this was to proceed in the spirit of the Yalta Agreement, i.e. by respecting the Soviet demand to return all refugees [belonging to] Soviet-controlled territories'.⁶¹

At first, the Soviets labelled refugees as an 'undemocratic element', later as 'Nazis', 'Fascists' and, finally, as a 'criminal element'. In an endeavour to appease Soviet demands, screening processes were undertaken by the Allied administration to identify and repatriate the 'undesirable element'. As part of the investigative process, prominent people began to visit the camps in which Baltic refugees were living. British parliamentarian Sir Arthur Salter commented:

I have visited them in their camps, and I cannot overstate the impression which was made on me as to the quality of these men and women. With nothing but tragedy in their past and, at the time I went there, nothing but blank uncertainty for the future, they maintained their morale in a perfectly marvellous way.⁶²

The suggestion of repatriation met with solid and organized resistance from Baltic community leaders and individual refugees. Strong support was given to refugees by Lithuanian organizations in America. Negotiations which ensued between Baltic refugee leaders and representatives of the Allied Forces were long and difficult. Meantime, Soviet 'recruiting committees' visited the larger camps in an effort to persuade refugees to return home. The campaign was extended by deploying throughout Germany and Austria hundreds of young Soviet men whose task it was to coax and harass refugees wherever they met: on streets, at railway stations and in other gathering places.

This went on for quite a long period. In 1948 US General Dwight Eisenhower, reflecting on the repatriation agreements reached at the Yalta Conference, wrote: '...We saw that their rigid application would often violate the fundamental humanitarian principles we espoused. Thereafter, we gave any individual who objected to returning the benefit of the doubt.'⁶³ While pressure was placed on refugees in various ways, stories circulated about the execution of Ukrainian and White Russian refugees and Vlasov army members.⁶⁴ In a recent publication, Antanas van Reenan writes:

An incident at the Kempton Displaced Persons Camp made the fear of forced repatriation a reality. Chicago resident Marija Stasaitis recalled the 'Black Sunday' of August 12 1945: 'We were in our church when we heard horrible screams coming from the Ukrainian side of the camp. All ran out toward the screaming. A most horrible sight came before our

⁶¹ *ibid.* Vol. 4, p. 457

⁶² *ibid.* p. 458 (cited from *British Parliamentary Debates*, May 23 1947.)

⁶³ *ibid.* p. 458 (cited from *Crusade in Europe*, 1948, p. 439.)

⁶⁴ As recently as 1987 British historian Count Nikolai Tolstoy published an account of the massacre of 60-70,000 Yugoslav and White Russian refugees.

eyes. Armed American soldiers were breaking into the Ukrainian chapel full of men, women and children. Bloodied Ukrainians were being dragged from the chapel ... Rifle butts were used as clubs to beat on the hands of Ukrainians who had formed chains to protect their children ... The entire camp was herded into trucks.⁶⁵

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Professor R.R. Davison of Texas University recalls how, while a rifleman in G Company of the US 318th Infantry Division stationed at Kempton in 1945, his company

... marched down to the church and the people were inside ... A wild battle ensued [with the] Orthodox priest wielding his cross, but rifle butts won and soon the battered people were driven from the church. A shot rang out from the courtyard and a boy in the group crumbled to the ground ... A little woman with tears running down her face and my rifle pointing at her head said in broken English, 'I thought Americans were good'⁶⁶

Allied authorities and Lithuanian community leaders did all they could to dispel rumours and deny the atrocities, presumably so that people did not become over-alarmed. Lithuanian refugees were encouraged by the press and by Lithuanian politicians in exile to believe that Balts would not be treated in the same way as Slavs. It was constantly emphasised that the situation was merely temporary, that a conflict between the United States and Russia was inevitable and imminent, and that as a result Lithuania would be free and all refugees able to return home. Although people wanted to believe that such would be the case, fear of danger and feelings of insecurity remained in their minds.

Emergence of National and Cultural Activities among Refugees: In the immediate post-war period Lithuanian refugees in German and Austrian camps comprised 42% men, 34% women and 24% children, with the age distribution as follows:⁶⁷

(1)	0-6 years	12%	(5)	36-50 years	20%
(2)	7-16 years	12%	(6)	51-60 years	7%
(3)	17-25 years	20%	(7)	Over 60 years	3%
(4)	26-35 years	26%			

In spite of the uncertain future, the camps became centres of organized community activity. In 1945, a Lithuanian Community Council was founded in

⁶⁵ A. van Reenan, *Lithuanian Diaspora: Königsberg to Chicago*, Lanham, N.Y., 1990, pp. 88-90

⁶⁶ R.R. Davison in *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 23 Sept 1983, p. 33

⁶⁷ Alseika, 'D.P.' in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 5, p. 148

Wiesbaden camp with branches in other large camps.⁶⁸ The role of the central organization was to promote and coordinate the activities of educational and cultural bodies. Typifying the extent to which refugee Lithuanians collectively released their previously inhibited energies were activities carried on in the Hanau camp situated on the River Main in the German province of Hesse. In May 1945 some 4,000 Lithuanians were accommodated in a former army barracks, severely war-ravaged and lacking water, electricity and sanitation. Camp members immediately set about forming a Lithuanian Community, elected a president and a committee which organized steering sub-committees for various jobs. In one month the camp buildings were restored, as well as electricity, water and sanitation. At the same time, the Lithuanians organized camp police and a camp post office. They established a kindergarten, a primary school and a high school. Also, courses of instruction were set up for carpenters, electricians, auto-mechanics, plumbers, nurses, tailors, shoemakers and weavers, ceramicists, and so on. The journalists established three newspapers: *Hanau lietuviai* (Lithuanians in Hanau), *Lietuvių žinios* (Lithuanian News) and *Mūsų aukuras* (Our Sacrificial Block), as well as an illustrated magazine for children called *Gimtinės žiburėliai* (The Lights of Our Homeland), all printed by hand press.

A disused stable was converted to a chapel for religious services. Cultural units were organized, comprising choir, folk dance, orchestral and theatrical groups. Scouts and sports groups were set up. In 1946, the Lithuanians, with the approval of UNRRA, established a traditional Lithuanian Court of Honour,⁶⁹ a library and a reading room. In 1948, they set up the TAUPA Co-operative.⁷⁰ Similar activities were set up in other displaced persons camps throughout Germany and Austria. In 1946, in Hamburg in the north of West Germany, the Baltic University was founded through the combined efforts of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian scholars. It had a teaching staff of 157 and at its peak was attended by 1,155 students, of whom approximately 400 were Lithuanian.⁷¹ As well, in 1946 in Munich in southern Germany, under the auspices of UNRRA, refugees organized another university which catered for about 300 Lithuanian students. Both universities were in existence for only two years and were then forced to close because of Soviet pressure on the Allied powers to curtail the academic and nationalist activities of Baltic peoples.

About twenty advanced Technical Schools were established, the most popular being in the Kempten and Kirchheim camps. Nursing schools were

⁶⁸ Bendorius, 'Wiesbaden', *ibid.*, Vol. 34, p. 612

⁶⁹ See p.63

⁷⁰ Oskaras Urbonas, 'Hanau' in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 8, pp. 115-121

⁷¹ V. Mačiūnas, 'Pabaltijo Universitetas' (The Baltic University), *ibid.*, Vol. 21, pp. 292-296

CHAPTER 2

CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

LITHUANIAN MYTHOLOGY, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND ART.

*How fine are forest sounds, not only scents!
 The forest hums, resounds with eloquence,
 While midnight brings a silence that is so
 Profound you hear each leaf and flower grow,
 Heart ee to t ee in gentle whispers call,
 Each sta th ough heaven move, each dew drop fall.*

Antanas Baranauskas (1835-1902)

(Translated by Peter Tempest)

LITHUANIAN MYTHOLOGY

In many countries mythology, generally accepted as having as its base the beliefs and rites of extinct religions, survives in folklore and folk art. This is especially true of agricultural societies which, because of the people's non-nomadic way of life and their conservative attitudes, retain in everyday life many old beliefs, albeit usually in changed form. Thus, rites become customs and feasts and menus for special occasions have links with sacrificial offerings of earlier times.

Many specific and often irrational attitudes, even of contemporary urban dwellers and especially relating to birth, life and death, can be found to have their origins in the beliefs of the past. Writers, musicians and artists transform old images by giving them new forms yet retain part of the essence and spirit of old attitudes. In poetry, paraphrased versions of folk songs emerge, together with legendary names and aspirations of old folk heroes. In visual arts, fragmentary images deriving from folk songs and sculptors' perceptions of old deities appear. Above all, and most often probably subconsciously, a vague ethos permeates the work of artists as, from time to time, their creativity captures the spirit of an inherited cultural legacy.

In 1387 Lithuania formally accepted Christianity, being, as noted earlier, the last European country to do so. The word 'formally' should be emphasised. Catholic priests and the small number of missionaries sent there were mainly of Polish or Czech origin and had little or no knowledge of the Lithuanian language. For the next 200 years their religious activities were limited to towns populated mainly by foreigners; the lifestyles and beliefs of the peasants were not usually regarded as either important or interesting.

In 1587 the first Lithuanian bishop Merkelis Giedraitis, reported to the Jesuit General: 'In our bishopric you will not find a single person who has gone to confession in all his life, you will not find a single person who has gone to communion, not one who would know the Lord's Prayer or would know how to cross himself ... They commonly offer sacrifices to Perkūnas [the god of thunder], worship Žaltys [a snake] and regard oaks as holy.'⁷⁷

It was not until the Reformation of the 16th century that Catholics were challenged to change such town-focused outlooks. Lutheran leaders paid greater attention to ordinary folk: they preached in the native Lithuanian language, established schools and, in 1547, published the first book in the Lithuanian language. This was a Lithuanian catechism written by the Rev. Martynas Mažvydas who condemned his parishioners' worship of the sun, moon, forest, rivers and pagan gods and spirits, some of which were identified in the book by their indigenous names. The Catholic clergy began to take more seriously their missionary task of converting to Christianity people who for centuries had been deeply immersed in their pagan faith. Such late Christianisation of the country gave opportunity for Lithuanian mythology to remain relatively intact in folklore, and especially in songs -- dainos -- as well as in proverbs, tales and rituals. In spite of intensive attempts over the next three or four centuries to eradicate them, mythological beliefs have survived in attenuated forms until the present day.⁷⁸

Information enabling reconstruction of old religious beliefs is now being gained from folkloric, linguistic, archaeological and historical research. Some old chronicles and histories have survived but are rarely helpful: first, because early writers, as a rule, did not know the indigenous language and, second, because more often than not, they focused on sensationalism.⁷⁹ As well,

⁷⁷ Marija Gimbutas, 'Baltų mitologija' (The Mythology of the Balts) in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas* (Science and Life) No. 1, 1989, p. 37

⁷⁸ Algirdas J. Greimas, *Apie dievus ir žmones* (On Gods and Men: Studies of Lithuanian Mythology), Algimanto Mackaus Fondas, Chicago, 1979, p. 14

⁷⁹ The following are offered as examples of the unreliability of old documented accounts: a) Pope Innocent III in his Papal Bull of 1199 declared that pagan Balts were venerating unclean spirits; Pope Gregorius IX in a Papal Bull of 1232 writes of human sacrifice.

Neither had any direct contact with Lithuanians or other Balts, and relied on the German Crusaders for their information. (Pranė Dundulienė, *Senovės lietuvių mitologija ir religija* [Mythology and Religion of the Ancient Lithuanians], Moksas, Vilnius, 1990, pp. 6-9.)

b) Some reports were of sensational character: for example, the 15th century Polish historian S.M. Kucziński described Lithuanians crawling on all fours like wild bears, and said that only

Christian monks and priests frequently falsified, ridiculed and degraded old beliefs and rituals in order to justify their harsh treatment of the pagans.

Lithuanian mythology, like the Lithuanian language, is related to Vedic⁸⁰ mythology and has ties with that of other Indo-European nations, the closest being with Latvian and Old Prussian.⁸¹

Broadly speaking, the religion of old Lithuania was anti-hedonistic, pantheistic and fatalistic: it also involved a strong belief in reincarnation and immortality. In its anti-hedonism, Lithuanian paganism differs fundamentally from the more widely known Greek and Roman paganism.

Living as they did in Northern Europe, Lithuanians experienced harsh climatic conditions and were virtually dependent on the brief spring and summer months to grow and harvest their crops and breed their cattle. They had great respect for Nature and its powers and for their gods and goddesses. Northern people dared not consider the possibility that their gods might be weak or indulgent; rather, they believed that the Baltic pantheon demanded honesty, diligence and righteousness, and that only obedient mortals were rewarded. As in many other pre-literate societies the customary law was very strong and the spoken word had absolute power even in the absence of human witnesses, because the unavoidable and unforgetting witness, Mother Earth, was omnipresent. In their pantheistic beliefs, the Balts regarded earth, trees, rivers and fire as holy entities in which gods, souls and spirits found their abode. Most Baltic gods were believed to be life-powers with vaguely distinguishable shapes and to exist in epiphanic form in natural objects such as trees, flowers and birds. It was believed that after death man's spirit passed over to a tree, bird or stone, so the whole of Nature was totally animate and to be venerated at all times.⁸²

Lithuanians' fatalistic view of the world has been documented many times and persists right to the present day.⁸³ In 1839, the German historian Tietz wrote: 'The Lithuanians are inclined to believe in an absolute fate, therefore they easily console themselves in unfortunate situations, and, furthermore, this belief gives them a reason to be courageous and daring in war.'⁸⁴

in the presence of people did they walk on two legs. (Bronius Dundulis in 'Požalginė Lietuva vakarų Europos akyse' [After Tannenberg: Lithuania in the Eyes of Western Europe] in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas* [Science and Life], No. 4, 1987, p. 17.)

⁸⁰ Vedic: the classical form of Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas.

⁸¹ Gimbutas, 'Baltų mitologija', in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 1, 1989, p. 38

⁸² Gimbutas, *The Balts*, Thames and Hudson, Bristol, 1963, p. 179

⁸³ Greimas, p. 74

⁸⁴ Jonas Balys in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 14, p. 68

Historical Influences

Professor Marija Gimbutas⁸⁵ was the first scholar to identify and classify the three historical layers which underlie present day Lithuanian culture and religion: Old Baltic, Indo-European and Christian.⁸⁶ Each period brought new beliefs and new deities, yet did not abrogate the earlier ones. Instead, each older culture was absorbed into and interwoven with the successive one.

The Old Baltic period: The culture of the Old Baltic period (before about 3,500 B.C.) was matriarchal, with women as the heads of families and tribes. The people were peace-loving, non-nomadic agriculturists. Their major gods were of female gender and mainly terrestrial.⁸⁷ The most revered were Mother Earth (Žemyna),⁸⁸ Mother Sun (Saulė), and Fortune (Laima). The first two were the life-givers, goddesses of fertility who took care of people and cattle, fields and forests. All things alive and growing were their children. But, especially, they were the children of Mother Earth and, for this reason, each person had to kiss the earth every morning and every evening. Mother Earth did not have an anthropomorphic image, but was an omnipresent, immanent power which gave birth and bestowed strength.

The people believed in a specific 'tree cult': trees were regarded as mute brothers animated with human spirits. There were not only holy trees, but also holy forests in which people worshipped their goddesses. The cutting down of holy trees was forbidden and punishable by death. Trees were also believed to be miracle workers and healers.⁸⁹ People made various promises to trees and asked in return for good health and fine crops. When their requests were granted, they hung votive objects on the tree branches.⁹⁰ The larger and more beautiful trees were often called 'dievaitis', not translatable precisely into English, but approximating to 'young god' or 'son of god'.⁹¹ The extent to which this pagan ethos permeated the people's consciousness is evident in a famous Lithuanian poem written by Catholic Bishop Antanas Baranauskas in 1858. As translated by Peter Tempest, it reads in part:

Our folk have always lived at one with trees

⁸⁵ Marija Gimbutas, b. 1921 is a prominent Lithuanian archaeologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

⁸⁶ Gimbutas, 'Baltų mitologija', in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 2, p. 34

⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁸⁸ Žemyna, a variation of the Lithuanian word Žemė: the earth, soil.

⁸⁹ Jonas Balys, *Lietuvių tautosakos skaitymai* (Lithuanian Folklore Readings), Patria, Tübingen, 1940, Vol. 2, p. 59

⁹⁰ Balys, 'Medžių kultas' (The Cult of Trees) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 18, p. 125

⁹¹ Gimbutas, 'Baltų mitologija', in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 9, p. 32

*And know few closer lifelong friends than these ...
 We often weep in woods, not knowing why
 For it is there we feel a pain is eased,
 The heart soothed and anxiety appeased;
 This is the source from which our tears and sighs,
 Our solace and our poetry arise.⁹²*

Mother Sun (Saule) spread her benevolence from above and was believed to have seven daughters. These were stars whose duties were to help people in various ways. In the Lithuanian language, all planets have mythological female names which have originated from this matriarchal period.⁹³ Lithuanians had -- and, indeed, to this day most have -- a fatalistic view of the world. They believed that Laima, the Goddess of Fortune, was the spinner of the thread of life and, together with Dalia, Goddess of Fate, decided at a child's birth the length and course of its life. Fire and water were also believed to be life-giving deities. Some six Lithuanian rivers are named The Holy (Šventoji). People kept in their homes holy water and holy fire (Gabijs). During the Spring Festival (now Easter), the high priest distributed holy fire to every homestead, and this had to be kept for the whole year. If not accorded respect, Gabijs could be revengeful.

Another symbol of longevity, fertility and good fortune was Žaltys, a particular species of non-venomous snake. 'Snake' translates in Lithuanian as 'gyvatė', a word meaning life. Žaltys was called 'the sentinel of the gods' and was believed to be loved by the Sun who cried whenever a snake of the species died.⁹⁴ Snakes of the Žaltys species were domesticated, lived in corners of houses and were fed milk and other food by the people well into the twentieth century. They are sometimes included as important characters in literature describing rural life.⁹⁵

During the matriarchal period, male gods exist but were of lesser importance and their roles were limited: fields were believed to be in the custody of the god Laukpatys,⁹⁶ the god Dimstipatis watched over the homesteads, and so on. Male gods were not sovereigns but were said to be brothers or husbands of the more important goddesses. However, one male god has not only survived to the present day but has also become a Lithuanian version of Christ. This is Vaižgantas, the tortured and sorrowful god of the flax, more recently

⁹² From the poem *Anykščių šilėlis* (The Forest of Anykščiai) by Antanas Baranauskas, *Lietuvių dienos* (Lithuanian Days), Los Angeles, 1970, p. 155

⁹³ Pranė Dundulienė, *Lietuvių liaudies kosmologija* (Cosmology of Lithuanian Folklore), Mokslas, Vilnius, 1988, p. 52

⁹⁴ Gimbutas, *The Balts*, p. 203

⁹⁵ Pulgis Andriušis, *Purienos po vandeniu* (Marsh-marigolds Under the Water), Nida Press, London, 1963, p. 140

⁹⁶ Laukpatys is a compound noun: 'laukas' : the field; 'patis' : it, itself, owner or custodian.

known as Rūpintojėlis (ill. 5). Born of Mother Earth and when grown to maturity, tormented, killed and later resurrected, Vaižgantas's life parallels the growing and processing of flax. A carved image of Vaižgantas in human form was found in recent times in central Europe and is estimated to be at least 7,000 years old (ill. 6).⁹⁷ Other European cultures have similar figures in their mythology: for example, there is the Greek god, Linas. ('Linas' in Lithuanian means flax.)

Pagan Lithuanians believed firmly in an afterlife which they imagined to be similar to life on earth. 'In the Old European philosophy there is no death. Life energy does not disappear, it only changes form.'⁹⁸ It was believed that each person's immortality consisted of two parts: vėlė (soul) and siela (spirit). Vėlė, often in the form of a bird, travelled to the Dausos, the permanent abode beyond the Milky Way which in Lithuanian is Paukščių takas (The Path of the Birds). There it climbed smėlio kalnelis (the Sandy Hill), opened vėlių vartelius (the Gate of the Souls) and alighted on the Vėlių suoloelis (the Bench of the Souls). Siela, the spirit, remained on earth, kept close to its former home and was reincarnated into a tree, a flower or a bird. Some spirits accommodated themselves in rivers, lakes and stones.⁹⁹ This explains the holiness of Nature which was believed to be totally animate. Man was seen to be an integral part of Nature and merely one of its many forms.

The Indo-European Period: The Indo-Europeans arrived in the Baltic region about 3,500-3,000 B.C. They were the first people to domesticate horses and they carried deadly weapons. They brought with them a patriarchal system with male gods of the sky and the idea of one omnipotent God. Indo-European gods rode golden chariots across the firmament, were revengeful and short-tempered, and threw axes, arrows and thunderbolts down to earth. Their goddesses played a minor role and were not represented as mothers but as lovers and beautiful brides.

During this period the sky was ruled by one main god, Dievas. Although folklorists do not agree regarding his rank and function, Marija Gimbutas believes that he was supreme over other gods.¹⁰⁰ Folklorists Algirdas Greimas¹⁰¹ and Jonas Balys¹⁰² dispute this and regard the pre-Christian sky god Dievas not as a supreme god, but as an equal among equals.

⁹⁷ Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, Harper, San Francisco, 1989, p. 183

⁹⁸ Gimbutas, 'Baltų mitologija', in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 5, p. 35

⁹⁹ Gimbutas, *The Balts*, p. 189

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ Algirdas Greimas, 'Apie folklorą, religiją ir istoriją' (On Folklore, Religion and History) in *Metmenys*, No. 19, 1970, pp. 36-39

¹⁰² Balys, 'Dievaitis-tė' (Sun of god or young god, goddess) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 4, p. 542

Both see the Lithuanian pantheon as democratic, each god having a special area of responsibility. This interpretation is given credence by the fact that the sky god Dievas in Lithuanian imagery is analogous with the great Sower, the caretaker of crops and in charge of the elements. The functions of judgement and punishment belonged to the god of justice, Perkūnas, meaning thunder. He rode noisily through the sky in a copper chariot drawn by a bull or a male goat and fought evil spirits and wrong-doers by inflicting lightning strikes and by throwing axes. On earth, he assumed the form of a middle-aged, copper-bearded hunter or chose to dwell in an oak tree.

Mėnuo was the moon-god, the husband of Saulė, the Sun. Because of his infidelity in courting the beautiful Aušrinė (Venus), his own daughter, he was cut in two by Perkūnas. Mėnuo, especially in the new and full phases, brought health and strength to all people, animals and plants. Vėlinas, the god of the dead and the custodian of buried and hidden riches, was later degraded by the Christians and became the devil, Vėlinas, forced to live underground. It is important to note that during this patriarchal period Laima, the Goddess of Fortune, had a diminishing role; later, she was joined with Dalia, the Goddess of Destiny, and later still, was merged with fairies and nymphs (laumės).

The Christian Period: Gimbutas identifies the third and least influential cultural historical layer as the Christian era. From the 16th century, when the Church began to teach Catholicism in the native tongue, strenuous efforts were made to uproot old beliefs. Such efforts were not entirely successful: Lithuanian dainos (songs) still contain numerous allusions to the Sun and Moon and most often to Laima and Dalia, but totally lack mention of Christian saints, or even of God (Dievas); raudos (lamentations) never mention the Christian deity or have Christian references; proverbs, riddles and aphorisms are also devoid of such subject matter.

Different, however, are fairy-tales which have been subject to individual retellings and interpretations and in which pagan characters have been replaced by Christian. Most popular is an old grey-bearded man representing God, and a strange, black-hatted man without nostrils, the Devil. It is significant, too, that the most important annual festivals,¹⁰³ the equinoxes and solstices which mark the changes of the year, became Christian celebrations: the Winter feast became Christmas; the Spring Feast is now Easter; Kupolinės, which commemorated the longest day and was originally in honour of the god Perkūnas, became St. John's Day; and Ilgės, the commemoration of the dead, is now called All

¹⁰³ Greimas, p. 294

Saints' Day. In making these changes, Lithuania has, broadly speaking, followed the rest of the Christian world.

On the other hand, many old, local customs prevailed and the result was, and to some extent still is, a somewhat different style of Christianity among Lithuanians. Amongst these differences can be cited the fact that Lithuanian Catholics venerate Mary the Mother, but not Mary the Virgin: this connects strongly with the long-held Lithuanian reverence of Mother Earth. In secular life, respect for the mother, and indeed for all women, originating in the matriarchal period, often over-rides the authoritarian attitude from the patriarchal period. In the Lithuanian Statute of 1529, for example, the penalty for the murder of a woman was twice as severe as for the murder of a man. Women in independent Lithuania (1918 to 1940) had equal rights in regard to access to education, work opportunity, pay, inheritance and voting. Fundamental to Lithuanian Catholic belief is not Jesus Christ but God the Father. He is not omnipotent and did not create everything from nothing; rather, He created Earth from the soil found under His fingernails.¹⁰⁴ Basic pagan attitudes have remained for many centuries. Religious festivals are celebrated in forms slightly different from celebrations in other countries. The following examples illustrate this point: On Easter morning, Lithuanians receive holy fire to be taken home from church. At the same service, the priests bless decorated Easter eggs as well as bread, cakes, cheese and butter piled on the altar by the parishioners. On St George's Day, previously dedicated to Žemėpatis, the brother or husband of Žemyna (Mother Earth), farmers make offerings and asks priests to say mass for the health of their cattle. During Pentecost, cows adorned with wreaths of flowers are blessed by parish priests who also give blessing to the rye-fields.

Respect for Mother Earth was particularly strong among rural folk well into the twentieth century. Kissing the earth each morning and evening was customary; oaths and important contracts among land dwellers were sealed by kissing the earth.¹⁰⁵ 'It is the same: to kiss the earth or the Cross', wrote ethnographer Jonas Balys.¹⁰⁶ Gifts from earth are still highly regarded and it would be difficult to find a Lithuanian who would throw out a piece of bread and not have such an 'evil act' on his conscience. The belief in trees as mute brothers survived well into the 20th century. Even today in the minds of ordinary Lithuanian rural dwellers, and often also of town dwellers, the forest is regarded as something to be highly respected, a place for meditation and recollection of one's thoughts. There are documented cases of miracle trees still

¹⁰⁴ Antanas Mažulis, 'Lietuviškoji krikščionybė' (Lithuanian Christianity), in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 13, pp. 100-102

¹⁰⁵ The author recalls the shock of many Lithuanians when they first heard Australians referring to 'earth' as 'dirt'.

¹⁰⁶ Balys, 'Žemės garbinimas' (Veneration of Earth) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 35, p.

growing in 20th-century Lithuania.¹⁰⁷ It is recorded that as recently as 1910 in the Nemajūnai district women still prayed to a double-trunked alder tree; the local priest informed the police and the tree was uprooted and burned during the night. A similar incident occurred near the village of Pėsiai in the district of Anykščiai where people suffering illness offered money to an old oak tree, believing that it could effect a miracle cure. In 1938, in fields near Peiliškiai village in the district of Viešniai, records tell of a miracle-performing pine tree upon which people used to hang votive offerings.¹⁰⁸ Even today, to many Lithuanians trees, especially the oak, remain highly respected; to all, the oak is the symbol of a glorious past. Tree veneration is very much fused with Christian belief as evidenced in contemporary times by the crosses and miniature chapels installed in oak and linden trees.¹⁰⁹ Trees and people are synonymous in Lithuanian folklore and literature, and, indeed, in the Lithuanian mind: the birch is a young man, the oak an old man; the linden is a young maiden, the fir a mother swathed in scarves.

In the Lithuanian mind, fire and water exist as special pristine entities. From their earliest years, children are given proverbial reminders such as: 'Do not talk evil in front of a fire' and 'Do not spit into water'. These leave a lifelong impression. Many old beliefs live on in visual form in folk art. As already described (p.30), the pagan god of flax -- Vaižgantas -- with the Christian attribute of a crown of thorns is a popular subject in sculpture and has retained the name from pagan times -- Rūpintojėlis (the Sorrowful God). Gimbutas says that in its primeval form the sculpture was a rather schematic rendering of a human figure. It survived in Europe through the centuries by acquiring the Christian paraphernalia and blossomed in Rodin's masterpiece, *The Thinker*. Lithuania is one of the very last places where this pre-Christian image found a safe abode.¹¹⁰

A similar transformation occurred with the pagan roofed pole which is a stylised version of the Tree of Life (ill. 7). It is a wooden structure erected near homesteads or at crossroads to commemorate special events: the birth or death of a family member, or as a sign of gratitude for good crops or recovery from illness. It originated from the necrocult when a simple pole was erected to commemorate the dead. Later its ornaments, symbols of reincarnation (bird, flower, toad, butterfly, snake) were covered with a roof in order to protect them from the elements. Roofed-poles today are decorated with flowers, žaltys and bird images, surmounted by an image of the sun and the crescent of the moon. The whole cosmogony is expressed in its construction and ornamentation.

¹⁰⁷ 'Medžių kultas' (The Cult of Trees), *ibid*, Vol. 18, p. 125

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*

¹¹⁰ Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe 7000-3500 BC*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1974, p. 232

During various times in the Christian Era roofed-poles were banned and people persecuted for erecting and venerating them. It is interesting to note that in 1426 Bishop Michael of Sambia and in 1752 Bishop Antanas Tiškevičius of Samogitia, notwithstanding the time span of more than 300 years, both condemned and prohibited the erection of 'pagan crosses'.¹¹¹ However, when prohibitions were unsuccessful, the roofed-poles were Christianised by the addition of a cross or a statuette of a saint. With these additions they became acceptable symbols of the Christian faith, but even today in some cemeteries, e.g. at Nida in Western Lithuania, populated by fishermen, the image of a turtle, rather than a cross, is erected.

Mythology and the Cult of the Dead

From earliest times, burial rites and gathering together of people to commemorate the dead have had an important place in religious observances. Archaeological excavations have revealed many items, believed necessary for the afterlife, buried in graves from the Old Baltic period. Women were buried with needles, thread and other domestic items; farmers with agricultural implements. From about 1,000-800 B.C. cremation was the usual method of dealing with human remains. During pagan times, ten days were designated annually for the commemoration of the dead. This period, called *Ilgės*, came to be known in Christian times as All Saints' Day and is still one of the most important and faithfully observed annual religious observances among Lithuanians. This cult of the dead is now accepted in Lithuania as a Christian custom. On All Saints' Day, on Christmas Eve and on other important family occasions it is customary to leave empty chairs for recently deceased family members and for food to be left overnight on the celebration table so that souls returning to earth can refresh themselves.

Gathering to commemorate the departed has special significance for Lithuanians, hence their continuing need to acquire special sections of cemeteries in which to bury their dead. During a funeral, soil, preferably from the deceased's birthplace, is symbolically strewn on the coffin, regardless of beliefs or burial rites. A very important part of funeral ritual has always been the *raudos*, the lamentations sung during long wakes. In Lithuanian folklore, this is one of the most lyrical aspects which, despite denunciation and prohibition by the Church, has survived to this very day.¹¹² It became either a very private expression of grief or, as nowadays, a romantic reference to the past. The

¹¹¹ Paulius Galaunė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas* (Lithuanian Folk Art), Lithuanian University, Kaunas, 1930, pp. 103-105, 131.

¹¹² Balys, *Lietuvių liaudies skaitymai*, p. 181

spontaneous chants extol the virtues of the deceased and describe the sorrow of the surviving relatives and their anxiety to be able to recognise the reincarnated form of the departed one. Typical is a mother's lament for her daughter.

*Where will I find thee?
In a flower bud or a tree?*¹¹³

The mediaeval historian Henricus in his *Chronicon Livoniae* writes: 'Even when at war, the Balts needed many days to lament the deceased and cremate them. Thus, in 1210 ... [they] ... had to stop the battle for three days for cremation and lamentation.'¹¹⁴ During the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in World War II, many thousands were deported to Siberia where a great number perished. In 1990, following Lithuania's regaining of independence, the massive task of returning skeletal remains to Lithuania was organized. The bones of the exiles were re-buried with great affection in their birthplaces. The burial days were declared public holidays in the particular localities so that residents were able to participate in honouring the martyrs.

Mythology as an Influence on Art

Folk Art: Pagan symbols continue to be used in visual art patterns. In weaving, symbols such as the sun, the stars, Laimas, the Tree of Life and Žaltys are used in traditional designs, especially in woven sashes. These symbols are believed to be coded scripts to the deities and the powers of Nature.¹¹⁵ The patterns on woven cloth and sashes are called raštas (writing). Making the patterns is rašyti (to write). The sun is 'written' symbolically in weaving as a disc, a swastika or a wheel; the moon is represented by a crescent; stars, as lines crossing the middle. There are particular symbols for the god Perkūnas, for the goddess Laima, and so on.¹¹⁶ The same patterns are used on everyday items such as spoon handles, distaffs and glory boxes and appear also on architectural details, especially on the ornamentation of the ridges of roofs, the shutters of windows and on doors, gates and even fences.

Spring is welcomed by colouring and decorating eggs, again with patterns using traditional symbols. When the veneration of the egg originated -- during the matriarchal period, at least 6,000 years ago -- the raštas (writing) on

¹¹³ Donatas Sauka, *Lietuvių tautosaka*. Mokslas, Vilnius, 1982, p. 186

¹¹⁴ Gimbutas, *The Balts*, pp. 186-187

¹¹⁵ Aivydas Butkus, 'Latvių ornamento struktūra' (The Structure of Latvian Ornamentation) in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, No. 11, 1989, p. 9

¹¹⁶ Pranė Dundulienė, 'Lietuvių liaudies meno simbolika' (Symbolism of Lithuanian Folk Art) in *Kultūros barai*, No. 2, 1977, pp. 55-58

the egg was a prayer appealing to the female goddesses: the sun, the stars or Laima, the Goddess of Fortune. In contemporary times, the meanings of traditional patterns have been largely forgotten. Only now are ethnologists, mythologists and archaeologists beginning to decipher the vaguely remembered past hidden in Lithuanian folk art.

Contemporary Artists: It is significant that basic attitudes to life from childhood are often manifested in the work of contemporary Lithuanian artists. Painters, graphic artists and art photographers frequently choose to portray the grandeur of Nature, be it mountain, tree or cloud. Time and again, the sun appears as a powerful, benevolent entity occupying a prominent, central role in the work of modern artists. A number of first-generation Australian-Lithuanian artists use abstract forms to convey the invisible powers of Spring and Summer. Often photographers, rather than choosing as their subjects urban life or human activities, often elect to capture the moment of a sunrise or sunset. Those poetically inclined are fascinated by the enigmatic world and often use in their work the effects of mist and fog. Usually, landscapes portrayed by first-generation Australian-Lithuanian artists emphasise the significance of Nature and the insignificance of Man.

In the Lithuanian psyche the historical, cultural and religious layers are intricately interwoven and have constituted one homogeneous way of life right into the 20th century, as the following incident demonstrates: in 1910, the Finnish ethnographer Professor Aukusti Robert Nieme, during the course of collecting contemporary Lithuanian folklore, recorded a conversation that he had had with an old country woman. In response to his question, 'Who is God?' she crossed herself and answered, 'Little Jesus'. When he asked her what would happen if Little Jesus died, she answered, 'My son, if God should die, Perkūnas is always there.'¹¹⁷

LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE

Lithuanian is the oldest surviving language of the Indo-European group, having developed from the proto-Baltic, or proto-Aryan, in about the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. In vocabulary and syntax it is closely related to Sanskrit and even after many centuries the similarities are remarkably strong. Many basic words have scarcely changed, as the following examples illustrate:

¹¹⁷ Algirdas Budreckis, "Senovės lietuvių tikėjimas ir jų pasipriešinimas krikščionybai" (Old Lithuanian Beliefs and Their Resistance to Christianity) in *Aidai* (Echoes), No. 2, 1987, p. 114

SANSKRIT
TRANSLATION

LITHUANIAN

ENGLISH

devas	dievas	god
vishpats	viešpatis	lord, master
prajapati	pradžiapatis	the first, creator
viras	vyras	man
matina	motina	mother
sunus	sūnus	son
dvara	dvaras	estate, farm
javas	javas	cereal, grain

Because it has retained its archaic structure to the present day, Lithuanian is of great significance in comparative linguistics. The family of Baltic languages consisted of three known groups:

PRO-BALTIC (pro-Aryan)

WEST BALTIC

(Became extinct in
14th century A.D.)
Old Prussian
Jotvingian

NORTH BALTIC

(Extinct)
Couronian
Zemgalian
Selonian

SOUTH BALTIC

(Became extinct
in pre-historic
times)
Upper Dnieper

CENTRAL BALTIC

Lithuanian
Latvian

Most Baltic languages are thus long extinct. Lithuanian and Latvian was one language until about the 6th to 8th centuries A.D. when they became differentiated. Latvian underwent considerable modernisation and simplification of grammar and form. Lithuanian remained conservative, retaining its archaic features. It has seven cases including vocative, three genders and dual forms of nominals. There are no articles and case is indicated by changes in word-endings as well as by movable accent marks. Word order in sentences is flexible. New words are formed mainly by the use of derivatives rather than by compounds.

A particular feature of the Lithuanian language is the abundance of diminutive nouns and adjectives,¹¹⁸ e.g. in *dainos* (songs) all nouns are in diminutive form and give tenderness and softness to the lyrics. Diminutives saturate all forms of folklore, and to a great extent also affect everyday speech, e.g. it is not acceptable to address anyone using straight, unembellished words such as 'mother' or 'father' (*motina*, *tėvas*); one of a great variety of diminutive forms must be used, e.g. *motinėle*, *tėvelis*. In all, seventy-two diminutive forms of 'mother' can be identified, the longer the diminutive form, the more gracious and pleasant-sounding to the Lithuanian ear. Leonardas Dambriūnas cites as an example the derivatives of *puodas* (pot) which range from the two-syllable base word across *puodukas* and *puodeliukas* to the final *puodelaitukelytėlis*, i.e. the base word plus eight diminutive syllables.¹¹⁹ This usage makes translation difficult as most modern languages do not use diminutive nouns; within the language itself, however, a poetic and emotional effect is produced. Poet Tomas Venclova writes: 'Musical and pliant, the Lithuanian language is capable of expressing the subtlest shades of meaning ... To the poet it offers an inexhaustible well of rhyme and alliteration; the prose writer enjoys its rich vocabulary and intricate syntax.'¹²⁰ The same complexity discourages foreigners from learning and studying Lithuanian. However, a number of philologists have learned it, and one, Theodore S. Thurston, writes: 'The richest cultural heritage of the Lithuanian people is their language, which represents one of the highest achievements of all mankind. It surpasses all other European languages in its antiquity, the purity of sounds and its wonderful grammatical structure ... The vowel system of the Lithuanian language is the most ancient in its style. It pre-dates Sanskrit, Latvian, Greek and Latin, in that order.'¹²¹

LITHUANIAN LITERATURE

Prior to the emergence of the Lithuanian National Movement in the late 19th century, very little Lithuanian literature existed in a recorded form. The first book printed in Lithuanian, as noted earlier, was a Protestant Catechism written by the Rev. Martynas Mažvydas. Published in 1547 in Prussia for Lithuanians living there, it rebuked them for their veneration of and belief in pagan gods and spirits. The Protestants of the time knew that the most effective way to

¹¹⁸ Diminutive: denoting an affix added to a word to express affection.

¹¹⁹ Leonardas Dambriūnas, 'Mažybiniai žodžiai' (Diminutive Words) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 18, p. 35

¹²⁰ Tomas Venclova: *Lithuanian Literature*, Lithuanian National Foundation Inc., USA, 1979, p.1

¹²¹ Theodore S. Thurston, *Comparative Philology and an Outline of Lithuanian Grammar*, William-Frederick Press, New York, 1963, Introduction.

introduce Christian beliefs was through the use of the native language. The first literary work, a long, hexametric lyric called *Metai* (The Seasons) by Protestant pastor Kristijonas Donelaitis, although written between 1760 and 1770 was published only in 1818, after the death of the writer. It became one of Lithuania's classics and was translated into several other languages.

Although there were other Lithuanian writers and poets of the 18th and 19th centuries, the majority wrote either in Polish or Russian, even though their themes were often taken from Lithuanian history and culture and expressed admiration for Lithuanian heroes and heroines. Prominent among a handful of authors of this period who wrote in their native Lithuanian and whose work is still in existence are: Simanas Daukantas, (1793-1864), who wrote a romantic version of Lithuanian history; Father Antanas Strazdelis, (1763-1833), a poet strongly influenced by folklore; Bishop Antanas Baranuskas, (1835-1902), the author of a particularly sophisticated poem, *Anykščiu, šilelis* (The Forest of Anykščiai); Bishop Motiejus Valančius, (1801-1875), the first writer of didactic prose; Dr. Vincas Kudirka, (1858-1899), an outstanding journalist, poet, translator and founder and editor of the newspaper, *Varpas* (Bell); and composer of the national anthem, Maironis, (1862-1932), who was probably the country's most celebrated and prolific poet.

Outstanding prose writers were Tumas Vaižgantas (1869-1933), Vincas Krėvė (1882-1954) and Mykolaitis Putinas (1893-1967). Women writers, often using pen-names, contributed mainly with novels, short stories and plays: Žemaitė (1845-1921), Lazdynų Pelėda (1867-1926) and Šatrijos Ragana (1873-1930).

However, the full blossoming of Lithuanian literature came with independence in 1918 when literary realism, symbolism and romanticism were enriched by expressionism and futurism. A new generation came to the fore: Jonas Aistis (1904-1973), Bernardas Brazdžionis, b. 1907, Antanas Miškinis (1905-1983) and Salomeja Nėris (1904-1945), all important poets. In Lithuanian literature to the present day poetry is a more widely favoured genre than prose and, in many poetic works, strong echoes of folklore and dainos are detectable. From the 1920s onwards, new styles invigorated the classicist and romantic literature and featured expressionism (as in the works of Balys Sruoga, 1896-1947); futurism (Kazys Binkis, 1893-1942); and -- a rare Lithuanian quality indeed -- humorous satire (Liūnė Janušytė, 1909-1965, and Antanas Gustaitis, 1907-1990). Lithuanian literature now became increasingly open to contemporary Western influences, especially as many promising writers went abroad to study. Important foreign literary works were eagerly translated and taught in schools.

Lithuanian Writers in Australia

Following World War II, most Lithuanian writers migrated to the USA. Of the few who came to Australia, still fewer remained here, a number moving again quite soon, generally to the United States. The most prominent Lithuanian writer to have lived in Australia was Pulgis Andriušis (1907-1970). In his early writing career in Lithuania he was successful as a humorist and not until coming to Australia did he begin to write lyrical, epic prose. His later works have become classics of Lithuanian literature because of their unique and carefully polished style and the use of rich idioms from bygone times. The subjects of his works are usually animate natural objects such as trees or sedges, lakes or forests, which recount in poetic prose their life stories interwoven with human events. Ten of his books were written and published in Australia and he received two prestigious USA awards: in 1947, he gained the Lithuanian Red Cross prize for *Ano j pusėj ežero* (On the Other Side of the Lake); in 1951, the Lithuanian Writers Association prize was awarded for his *Sudiev kvietkeli* (Goodbye, My Little Burgeon). He gained prominence also as a translator: Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Rolan Dorgeles's *Wooden Crosses* were both translated by him from the Spanish originals.

Juozas Žukauskas (1909-1984) was a short-story writer and the founding editor of the weekly newspaper, *Mūsų Pastogė*. Vincas Kazokas (1919-1984) wrote philosophical poetry. Two collections of his poetry have been published: *Sapnų pėdomis* (In the Footsteps of Dreams), 1953 and *Ugnis ir žodis* (Fire and Word), 1989. For twenty years until his death he was editor of *Mūsų Pastogė* and during that time the paper became renowned for his editorials. Kazokas also translated into Lithuanian *The Great Inquisitor* by Fedor Dostoevsky, Artur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, *The Prodigal Son* by Andre Gide and Felix Timmerman's *The Psalm of the Peasants*.

Doubtless, their wide-ranging, often traumatic, experiences and the accompanying emotional reactions have prompted many Lithuanians in exile to express themselves in writing. In the 1990 anthology of Lithuanian literature in Australia forty-two writers are included.¹²² Of these, twenty-four are male and eighteen female. Altogether they produced forty-five publications: twenty-seven prose works and eighteen works of poetry, the majority published by established publishing houses in Great Britain or the USA. The traditional preponderance of poetry in Lithuanian literature is changing, due mainly to an increasing number of memoirs and reminiscences being written for, and often dedicated to, future generations.

¹²² *Po pietų kryžiumi* (Under the Southern Cross), Sietynas, Vilnius, 1990.

Among Lithuanians currently writing in Australia, thirty-five are Lithuanian-born, and of the seven born in Australia, four write in both languages and three in English only. Not surprisingly, subject matter is related to the authors' ages and experiences: the older writers deal frequently with the tragedy of being uprooted from their homeland, of war-time and of their early life in Australia, usually in realistic style; the younger writers use wider and more varied subject matter, most often free of nostalgic sentiment. These younger people often question philosophically the particular situation of their being between two cultures and experiment with a variety of contemporary writing styles.

Apart from Andriušis, three other authors have received literary awards: in 1978, Bronė Mockūnas, b. 1918, received the Adelaide Lithuanian Scouts Organization prize for her novel, *Saulėlydis* (Sunset); in 1981, Agnė Lukšytė, b. 1920, gained an award for her short story, *Zefirantes* from the US newspaper, *Dirva* (Furrow); and in 1984, Saulius Kubilius, b. 1960, received the prize donated by the US cultural magazine, *Ateitis* (Future) for his poetry in manuscript.

A number of Lithuanian visual artists engage also in literary activities, chiefly the writing and illustrating of books. These artists include Jurgis Janavičius, b. 1926; Kazys Kemežys, b. 1937; Bronė Mockūnas, b. 1918; Irene Sibley, b. 1944; Jūratė Sasnaitis, b. 1958; Kristina Vaičiulytė, b. 1951; Mindaugas Simankevičius, b. 1956; Laura Baltutis, b. 1963 and Danius Kesminas, b. 1966.

LITHUANIAN ART

Pre-historic Art

The oldest form of artistic expression in Lithuania, as in other long-established cultures, is to be found in folklore. Songs, chants, lamentations -- many sung to this day in versions which have hardly changed because of their rhyming structure -- are most important sources for research. In Lithuania in recent decades, irrigation and construction works have revealed other clues: crudely carved statues have been found by archaeologists at the bottom of drained marshes, streams and lakes; the demolition of old buildings in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, and in other population centres has revealed similar artefacts hidden in brick walls. Mythologists have identified these statues as images of pagan gods and goddesses.¹²³ The places in which they have been found

¹²³ Vytautas Urbanavičius, 'Laidojimas vandenyje: atradimai ir mįslės' (Interment in Water: Discovery and Puzzles) in *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, No. 7, 1987, p. 23

suggest they were hidden to prevent destruction. Archaeological discoveries of ornamented utensils and jewellery, made of bone, amber, horn, stone or metal, and displaying incisions and carved representations of the sun, moon, stars, birds and animals, have been carbon-dated to the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. Fragments of woven cloth from that era show the same symbols. Thus it is evident that folklore and folk art are very closely linked.

It would seem that present-day Lithuanian roofed poles¹²⁴ have evolved from Old Prussian sepulchral poles which were sometimes adorned with anthropomorphic images, but most often with representations of birds, flowers, turtles and, especially, with metamorphic creatures such as butterflies, snakes and toads.¹²⁵ In more recent times, the poles are always roofed to protect the wooden carvings from the elements.

Emergence of Urban and Christian Art

With the development of towns in the 10th century A.D., craft groups emerged.¹²⁶ From this time, there was a considerable increase in the production of ceramic utensils, jewellery and woven cloth, all with similar symbols. From the 13th century, encounters with Russian people and marriages between Lithuanian nobles and Russians brought Byzantine influences to local architecture, although very few examples have survived because of fires, looting by invading armies and wars through the centuries. In the 14th century, with Lithuania's acceptance of Christianity, the first churches were built. These were in Romanesque and Gothic styles. During the second half of the 16th century, when discord between Catholics and Protestants was at its height, the Catholics built more churches, the tall spires of which changed the character of the flat Lithuanian landscape. From then on, Renaissance and, especially, Baroque influences were evident in the architectural styles of church buildings as well as in painting, sculpture and sepulchral art.¹²⁷

With the publication in the 16th century of the first book¹²⁸ in the Lithuanian language, graphic art was introduced into Lithuania. Increased pressure from the Catholic Church now demanded public expression of faith in visual form. The figure of Rūpintojėlis (The Sorrowful God) now became a

¹²⁴ Roofed poles are tall, ornamented structures erected in memory of the dead or as a sign of gratitude for fulfilled wishes, recovery from disease, and so on. They generally stand in cemeteries, at crossroads or in front of farmhouses, and today still form a significant part of the Lithuanian landscape.

¹²⁵ Paulius Galaunė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas* (Lithuanian Folk Art), Lietuvos universitetas, 1930, pp. 104-05

¹²⁶ Tadas Adomonis and Klemensas Čerbulėnas, *Lietuvos TSR dailės ir architektūros istorija*, (History of Art and Architecture of Soviet Lithuania), Mokslas, Vilnius, 1987, p. 29

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 200-250

¹²⁸ See pp. 36-37

Christian symbol; roofed poles, too, were given Christian attributes. Encouragement was given to the carving of figures of saints and they became additions to the roofed poles. Hitherto, the peasants had been familiar with painting only in its applied form: on pottery, glory-boxes, furniture and domestic utensils. Graphic art began to be used for religious subjects and Christian symbols were gradually included as part of sepulchral art. Until the 16th century, the only items of fine art in Lithuania were in the courts of nobles and in churches. It is known that nobles in the 15th century possessed collections of paintings.¹²⁹ With the 16th-century intensification of religious rivalry between Catholics and Protestants, general cultural life became more open to Western influence. From Italy, the Netherlands and France, painters were invited to Lithuania where they propagated the new ideas of Renaissance art.¹³⁰

The Role of the University of Vilnius

A major move towards systematic development of art occurred with the founding of the University of Vilnius in 1579. The Faculty of Philosophy provided courses in architecture, drawing and engraving. In 1793, Architecture became an independent faculty and in 1797 a Faculty of Painting was established, giving much greater freedom to art teachers and students. The first holder of the Chair of Painting was Lithuanian-born Pranas Smuglevičius (1745-1807), a student of the German artist, Anton Raffael Mengs (1728-1779), an exponent of Neo-classicism. Smuglevičius painted Lithuanian themes, e.g. *Lietuvos valstiečiai* (Lithuanian Villagers) in Neo-classical style, and exotic themes, e.g. *Persų pasiuntiniai* (Persian Envoys with the King of Morocco) in Romantic style. His successor was the Romantic painter, Professor Jonas Rustemas (1762-1835). Many Lithuanian painters of that time alternated their styles; in the Lithuanian context, Romanticism and Neo-classicism were not as sharply opposed to each other as in France where they had originated. Thus we see Kanutas Ruseckas (1800-1860), who had studied in Paris and Italy, in *Lietuvaitė plovėja* (Lithuanian Maiden Reaping), 1844, showing Romantic traits (ill. 8), while in his *Lietuvaitė su verbomis* (Lithuanian Maiden with Willow Twigs), 1847, linear, Neo-classical elements prevail. The Chair of Sculpture was established in 1803 with Frenchman, Professor Andre Jean le Brun (1737-1811) as its first head. The Chair of Graphic Art, founded in 1810, was held by Joseph Saunders (1773-1845), an Englishman. He not

¹²⁹ Ingrida Korsakaitė and Irena Kostkevičiūtė, *XX a. lietuvių dailės istorija* (History of 20th Century Lithuanian Art), Vaga, Vilnius, 1982, p. 12

¹³⁰ Pranas Gudynas, *Lietuvos tapyba* (Lithuanian Painting), Vaga, Vilnius, 1976, p. 13

only taught but also reformed the art curriculum by introducing a formal course in the history of art, which he delivered in French. In 1812 Saunders organized the first students' art exhibitions and competitions in Lithuania. From that time until 1832, student exhibitions were held biennially. Saunders also donated his own graphic art works to the University of Vilnius.¹³¹

During the early part of the 1800s wood engraving began to spread more widely throughout the rural community. A number of local artists as well as students and teachers from Vilnius University were given commissions by the State and the Church; previously such work had been carried out by invited foreign artists. Baroque-style churches were erected in this period and lavishly decorated with sculptures and paintings, and the courts of noblemen were embellished with patrons' portraits and sculpted busts.¹³²

Effects of Russian Oppression

In 1832, as noted in the first chapter, the University of Vilnius was closed by the Russian Government in retaliation for the 1831 uprising in which many university students and a number of lecturers had taken an active part. During the short period of the existence of the Fine Arts departments the best results has been achieved in portrait painting and graphic arts, especially in book, map and plan illustration and engraving. Above all, the school had aroused the attention of the wider population. Now, because there remained not one tertiary institution in Lithuania, students had to travel abroad for study. The situation was further aggravated by the 1863 uprising; in 1864 the Press Prohibition Declaration imposed a total ban on Lithuanian books.

After some time it became clear that the press prohibition applied to the printed word, not the visual image. The circulation of wood prints among the rural population increased, many of these being produced by the peasants themselves. In 1866, Ivan Trutnev (1827-1912), established a Drawing School which functioned until his death; the school had an average annual enrolment of one hundred students.¹³³ Juozapas Montvila's (1850-1911) painting courses began about the same time and had an average annual enrolment of about one hundred.¹³⁴ However, private art courses did not have authority to issue degrees or diplomas; they were limited to the preparation of students for the recognised art schools of Russia. Such a situation did little to encourage talented

¹³¹ Povilas Reklaitis, 'Vilniaus meno mokykla' (Vilnius Art School) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 34, p. 173

¹³² Gudynas, *Lietuvos tapyba*, p. 5

¹³³ Reklaitis, 'Vilniaus meno mokykla' (Vilnius Art School) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 34, p. 173

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 248

students to remain in Lithuania. Some established artists, however, did choose to stay in Vilnius and work there. Two of them were Niccolo Elviro Andriolli (1836-1893), born in Vilnius of Italian parentage, and Kazimieras Alchimavičius (1840-1917) who in his Romantic paintings depicted the early history of Lithuania, e.g. *Kunigaikščio Gedimino sapnas* (Dream of Duke Gediminas) and *Perkūno šventovės griuvėsiai* (Ruins of the Temple of Perkūnas).¹³⁵

The Re-awakening of Lithuanian Art

Towards the end of the 19th century, the rising Lithuanian National Movement included many artists. Following the Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 Revolution, the Russian Government became more lenient. In 1904 the Press Prohibition Decree was abrogated and permission for people to gather for peaceful purposes and for the establishment of various cultural organizations was given and used to advantage. It was decided to organize the first Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Vilnius. Foremost amongst the organizers who came from various art schools were Petras Rimša (1881-1961) who had studied sculpture in Cracow; Antanas Žmuidzinavičius (1876-1966) who had studied painting in Paris; and painter and composer, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) who had studied in Warsaw and Leipzig.

On 7 January 1907, the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition was opened by the Lithuanian patriarch, Dr. Jonas Basanavičius. In all, 213 works of art were displayed by twenty-three Lithuanian artists, many of whom were living at the time in other parts of Europe. A separate folk-art section contained about five hundred items.¹³⁶ Jonas Rimša exhibited two sculptures, *Artojas* (The Ploughman) and *Vargo mokykla* (The Lithuanian Clandestine School), the latter having as its theme the Press Prohibition. This has become famous in Lithuanian art history. Outstanding even on an international scale was the work exhibited by M.K. Čiurlionis whose painted *Fugos ir Sonatos* (Fugues and Sonatas, ills. 10, 11 & 12) proved enigmatic to many people for a long time. Čiurlionis, also a composer, had turned to painting in an endeavour to portray in visual terms his metaphysical visions and his interpretations of Lithuanian legends. He introduced the fourth dimension -- time -- to the art of painting; he grouped his works in cycles and, in ways not done before, used the principles of musical composition in visual art. His painted sonatas consist, as do musical sonatas, of three or four movements with appropriate names: *Allegro*, *Andante*, *Scherzo*, *Finale*. In an analogy to musical arrangement, his paintings move

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 89

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 102

from exposition through development to a recapitulation of ideas in the same visual piece. The result is imposing yet disconcerting. Čiurlionis exerted a tremendous influence on Lithuanian art and many attempted to imitate him: Antanas Žmuidzinavičius and Kazys Šimonis (1887-1978) both created beautiful paintings, but they were not musical visions nor arranged in the same musically constructive way; rather, Žmuidzinavičius rendered his harmonious works as stylised, realistic landscapes (ill. 13), and Šimonis produced stylised, cubistic interpretations of landscapes and figures (ill. 14). Others who modelled their art on Čiurlionis were the Russian, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Czech František Kupka (1871-1951), but neither artist fully understood Čiurlionis's approach or his intention.¹³⁷

The First Lithuanian Art Exhibition was of paramount importance in Lithuanian cultural development. It demonstrated the strong creative power remaining despite centuries of oppression and foreign domination. It also strengthened the determination of many artists to consolidate ties with folk art. After the enthusiastic acceptance by intellectuals and public alike of the First Exhibition, it was decided that these should become regular events. Until the outbreak of World War I, eleven exhibitions were staged: eight in Vilnius, two in Kaunas and one in Riga, the capital of neighbouring Latvia.

Their success prompted the artists Čiurlionis, Rimša and Žmuidzinavičius to establish in 1907 the first Lithuanian Art Society, the aims of which were to organize exhibitions, collect folk-art items and exchange professional knowledge. Most members were graduates of art schools in France, Italy, Poland, Russia and Germany. The Constitution of the society was drafted by Čiurlionis whose aim that 'Folk-art must be the basis of our art, from it must arise a distinctive Lithuanian style,'¹³⁸ became a maxim for most Lithuanian artists for years to come.

Establishment of Art Schools

During World War I, many artists left Lithuania which had become a battlefield for the German and Russian armies, and moved to Russia. In 1918, after Lithuania's proclamation of independence, despite the prevailing general chaos and many other difficulties, painter Adomas Varnas founded and conducted a private painting studio in Vilnius. In 1920, the institution moved to Kaunas

¹³⁷ Kandinsky said that he aimed to 'outdo' Čiurlionis. (*Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis*), Bibliography compiled by Čiurlionyte-Karužienė et al, Vilnius, 1970, p. 587 and Kazokas, G.E., 'The Life and Work of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1982.

¹³⁸ A. Žirgulytė, ed., *M.K. Čiurlionis: Apie muziką ir dailę* (M.K. Čiurlionis: On Music and Art) compiled by V. Čiurlionis-Karužienė, Vilnius, 1960, p. 280

where it merged with a private drawing course (Piešimo Kursai) conducted by painter Justinas Vienožinskis (1886-1960). This amalgamation constituted a basis for the Lithuanian School of Art, set up in 1922, and which in 1929 was re-named the Kaunas School of Art.¹³⁹ At the outset the curriculum consisted of a course of four years' study which from 1929 was extended to six years. Classes were held in graphic arts, painting, sculpture, stage decorating (scenography), mosaics, fresco, stained-glass work and ceramics. In 1935 a weaving class was added. Enrolment was approximately 140 students with about twenty artists as instructors. Characteristically for that time, every teacher had been educated in several schools of Europe so that the institution contained representatives of many different styles and teaching methods. Justinas Vienožinskis, the founder of the school, its first director and Head of the Painting department, had received his art training in Cracow (Poland) and Paris (ill. 15). By nature a rebellious and forthright person, he was active in art politics and demanded that the government support the School of Art.¹⁴⁰

Adomas Galdikas (1893-1969), the Head of the Graphics department, was a painter and graphic artist trained in St. Petersburg as well as in Italy, France, Sweden and Germany (ill. 16). An enthusiast, he attracted the most talented students to his classes. Galdikas and Vienožinskis were considered *avant-garde* artists and innovators.¹⁴¹ Adomas Varnas (1879-1979), a painter and teacher of painting, was a graduate of the St. Petersburg Art Academy but had studied also in Cracow, Geneva and Sicily (ill. 17). Petras Kalpokas (1880-1945), a teacher of painting, has studied in Riga (Latvia) and Odessa (Russia) as well as in Italy and Switzerland. Mstislavas Dobužinskis (1875-1957), who had studied in Russia, Germany, Hungary and France, taught scenography and was closely associated with Stanislavsky's theatre and Diaghilev's ballet (ill. 18).

From 1935, Vytautas Jonynas, b. 1905, a graduate of art schools in Kaunas and Paris, brought a new approach to graphic art, loosening the rigid lines and displaying a fresh sensitivity to the play of light (ill. 19). Juozas Zikaras (1881-1944), a graduate of St. Petersburg Art Academy, remained faithful to the Realist tradition of that institution (ill. 20). In general, however, the School of Art oriented its teaching towards the innovations of the West.

Teachers at the school understood very well the urgent need in newly independent Lithuania for the practical application of art: in the design of new currency, postage stamps, book illustrations, stage decoration and numerous everyday commodities. Therefore, as well as the teaching of fine arts and art

¹³⁹ Apolonija Valiuškevičiūtė, *Kauno meno mokykla*. (Kaunas School of Art) Vaga, Vilnius, 1971, p. 19

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 24-27

¹⁴¹ Gudynas, *Lietuvos tapyba*, p. 9

theory and history, aspects of applied art and the education of art teachers were given particular emphasis. In the event, impressive achievements were obtained in graphic arts, ceramics and stage decoration.¹⁴²

In 1939, with the regaining of the capital, Vilnius, the School of Art was separated into two campuses: the main section was transferred to Vilnius and became known as the Academy of Art while the section that remained in Kaunas was re-named the School of Applied Arts.¹⁴³ The Graphic Arts department at Kaunas became the most popular, due largely to the enthusiasm of Professor Adomas Galdikas and, again, attracted the best talents in the institution. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the origins and specificity of Lithuanian art and these were believed to be located in folk art. Each school had a five-year programme and accepted only secondary school graduates. However, in 1943 the Germans closed all Lithuanian tertiary learning establishments in retaliation for Lithuanians' refusal to form an SS battalion.

Contributions by Art Societies

During the years of independence, Lithuanian artistic life was invigorated by the activities of art societies. In 1920, the Association of Creative Artists was formed and attracted visual artists along with academics, musicians, actors and architects.¹⁴⁴ Its first president was painter Adomas Varnas. In the same year, the Lithuanian Art Society, originally founded in 1907, was revived. It was a body of more conservative artists and was active until 1930 when the Society of Independent Artists was formed.¹⁴⁵ This group was headed by an artist of the younger generation, Adolfas Valeška, b. 1905, who declared: 'We have decided to free Lithuanian art from the shackles of academicism, naturalism and dilettantism.'¹⁴⁶ In 1932, a group of *avant-garde* artists formed the Arts Society. In their manifesto they, too, condemned academicism and decided to 'use the means of modern art to create a specific form of art based on Lithuanian folk-art.'¹⁴⁷ Although some artists belonged to both societies, friction was apparent not only in the exhibition halls but also in the press. In 1935, Justinas

¹⁴² Visiting performers and conductors from foreign countries were surprised to see stage décor of such artistic quality. In 1933, Frank von Hesslin who had been invited to conduct Mozart's opera, *Don Juan* exclaimed on seeing Dobužinskis's stage decorations: "Oh, my dear God! I never expected to see such a miracle!" (Jonas Mackonis in *XXa Lietuvių dailės istorija 1900-1940* [The History of 20th Century Lithuanian Art 1900-1940], Vol. 2, Vaga, Vilnius, 1983, p. 364)

¹⁴³ Taikomosios Dailės Institutas.

¹⁴⁴ Meno kūrėjų draugija.

¹⁴⁵ Nepriklausomųjų dailininkų draugija.

¹⁴⁶ Jonas Girmius, 'Istorinė dailės apžvalga' (Historical Survey of Art), in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 706

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 294

Vienožinskis founded the Lithuanian Artists Association¹⁴⁸ in an endeavour to bring together artists from different schools of thought.

Students at the School of Art followed the lead set by the artists and formed their own associations. In 1925, they founded Trys skydai (Three Shields) and Tulpė (Tulip) followed in 1926 by Trys Tulpės (Three Tulips). These associations were based not so much on different views of art but more with a view to mutual assistance. In 1932, however, a group of art students with leftist political leanings founded Linija (Line) and in the following year the Forma (Form) group, consisting of only eight members, all of them graphics students, was established. Forma's aim was 'to foster an individual Lithuanian spirit.'¹⁴⁹ Six of the group's members fled from Lithuania in 1944, four continuing to work in exile as graphic artists and ultimately achieving success in other countries. These artists were Paulius Augius (1909-1960) and Viktoras Petravičius (1914-1989), both of whom worked in the USA; Telesforas Valius (1910-1977) who became well known in Canada; and Vaclovas Ratas (1910-1973) who worked in Australia.

Influence of Western European Art

In the time of Lithuania's independence, talented students were often sent or made their way to France or Italy for further study, since there was a tendency for Lithuania to avoid political contact with its close neighbours Poland and the USSR, and as a result cultural contacts were not encouraged.

On their return from abroad, artists brought with them many new ideas. They frequently rebelled against academic realism and demonstrated in their work freedom of composition, line and palette. They introduced Impressionism, Fauvism¹⁵⁰ and echoes of Cubism, but it is interesting to note that not one Lithuanian artist embraced Abstract Art, nor even the concept of it; all remained steadfastly in the visible world, the world of tangible objects. This was probably due to long conditioning by traditional Lithuanian art schools as well as by the national character which tended to be of a conservative nature. While some painters of the older generation such as Adomas Varnas and Antanas Žmuidzinavičius continued to employ academic, realistic styles, most artists worked in individual variations of Impressionism. These included Justinas Vienožinskis, Petras Kalpokas (ill. 21), Kajetonas Sklerius (1876-1932), Vladas Didžiokas (1889-1942), and Jonas Šileika (1883-1960).

¹⁴⁸ Lietuvių dailininkų draugija.

¹⁴⁹ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. Vol. 6, p. 339

¹⁵⁰ Fauvism: the name given to the artistic movement in the first decade of the 20th century, principally characterised by the unprecedented use of pure, 'liberated' colour.

Stronger decorative aspects appeared in the work of Mstislavas Dobužinskis (1875-1957), and Eugenijus Kulvietis (1883-1969). One of the most outstanding original painters was Adomas Galdikas (1893-1969, ill. 22) who, notwithstanding his age, varied his Expressionistic style by the use of explosions of colour and movement. Kazys Šimonis (1887-1978) painted cubistic, rhythmic visions based in Lithuanian folk-art and was considered a follower of Čiurlionis. Vytautas Kairiūkštis represented the formalist cubistic group (ill. 23); Viktoras Vizgirda, b. 1904, represented Post-Impressionism (ill. 24).

Sculptor Petras Rimša (1881-1961), a graduate of art institutions in Cracow, Paris and St. Petersburg, created many sculptures which have become symbols of the Lithuanian Resistance. He began in realist style as in his *Lietuvos vargo mokykla*, 1906, and went on to work in a highly ornamented, decorative style, e.g. *Skausmas* (Grief), 1916 (ill. 25). Another sculptor, Juozas Zikaras, creator of the celebrated figure of *Laisvė* (Freedom) remained firm in his academic, realistic style. Only from 1933 did Juozas Mikėnas (1901-1964), a graduate of Kaunas and Paris schools and teacher at the School of Art, begin to create sculptures in modern style. He believed in simplification of form, impressionistic modulation of surface and distortion of figure. Domicelė Tarabilda, b. 1912, deserves special mention for her numerous illustrations of children's books and magazines (ill. 26), which became a strong influence on graphic artists. Notwithstanding the many innovative ideas brought from Western Europe, Lithuanian painters and sculptors remained basically realists. Scenographers, however, were the exception and were more innovative in their approach, using bold, abstract structures in stage decoration. Dobužinskis, the first prominent scenographer, and Stasys Ušinskas (1905-1974), another Kaunas and Paris graduate, both experimented daringly in the theatre and were much admired by artists and public alike (ill. 27). Presumably, what was not acceptable in 'real life' was entirely permissible on the stage.

International Recognition

In international art exhibitions in the thirties, Lithuanians gained recognition in graphics, ceramics and scenography. In 1935, graphic artists received high commendation at Košice in Czechoslovakia. In 1937, at the World Exhibition of Art and Technology in Paris, graphic artists gained a number of awards: the Grand Prix was won by Viktoras Petravičius; the Prix d'Honneur went to Vaclovas Ratas; Gold Medals were awarded to Vytautas Jonynas, Paulius Augius and to three other Lithuanian graphic artists as well as to sculptor

Robertas Antinis (1898-1981).¹⁵¹ At the same exhibition Eleonoira Marčiulionis, b. 1912, received the Prix d'Honneur for ceramics, and her teacher Liūdas Strolis, b. 1905, and Vaclovas Miknevičius were awarded Gold Medals; scenographers Adomas Galdikas, Liūdas Truikys (1904-1987) and Stasys Ušinskas also received Gold Medals for their work.¹⁵² In 1937, Lithuanian graphic artists were successful at the International Ethnographic Art Exhibition held in New York, gaining a number of Gold Medal awards.¹⁵³

At the time, there were few professional art critics, but commentaries on art and art exhibitions were written frequently by artists, writers and priests.¹⁵⁴ This enlivened the art scene and caught the attention of the general public. The more conservative commentators supported only an academic style, while others favoured the *avant-garde* artists. Most controversial comments were, however, directed more at painters than paintings, at methods of art teaching and especially at the drawing of nude models.¹⁵⁵

Effects of World War II

In 1940 the Soviet occupation paralysed cultural life, including visual art, in Lithuania. Artistic experimentation and individualism of any kind were prohibited and Socialist Realism declared to be the only acceptable style. Subject matter was restricted; it was demanded that the Communist Party be portrayed as heroic and victorious, the people as happy and liberated, and so on. The result was a stagnation of artistic activity especially when, at the same time, purges and deportations came into effect. In 1941, with the German occupation, Lithuania was forced into a war situation and the cultural environment remained as it had been under the Soviets. In 1944, with the second Soviet invasion, approximately 80,000 people, among them about one hundred professional artists, fled to the West.¹⁵⁶ It was not until after the war, when refugees were gathered in repatriation camps in Germany and Austria, that artistic activities began to re-emerge. Suppressed energy and initiative were unleashed in many forms although conditions were made difficult by political insecurity, a lack of materials, cramped working space and restricted mobility.

¹⁵¹ Valiuškevičiūtė, 'Kauno meno mokykla', p. 148

¹⁵² *ibid*

¹⁵³ At this exhibition three medals were awarded also for woven wallhangings, three for sculpture and two for painting.

¹⁵⁴ Korsakaič and Kostkevičiūtė, *XX-a lietuvių dailės istorija*, pp. 107-109

¹⁵⁵ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. Vol. 22, p. 31 and Valiuškevičiūtė, p. 51

¹⁵⁶ Reklaitis, 'Die Bildende Kunst der Litauischen Emigration 1945-1966' in *Acta Baltica*, Vol. 6, p. 237

Art Activities in Exile

Small-scale art exhibitions, usually with folk-art sections, were organized in most of the larger displaced persons camps. Such art shows strengthened the spirit of the homeless refugees. At the same time, they did much to convince Allied officials of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration that Baltic refugees were not of Russian origin, that they had a distinctly separate culture and were not the criminals that Soviet spokesmen attempted so eagerly to portray. In 1946, graphic artist Viktoras Petravičius organized the first large-scale, post-war Baltic art exhibition in Schöngau in Germany; this was visited by some 10,000 people. In 1947, four prominent graphic artists, all members of Forma -- Paulius Augius, Viktoras Petravičius, Vaclovas Ratas and Teleforas Valius -- organized a graphic art exhibition in Freiburg-im-Breisgau; this received wide recognition in French and German circles. In 1948 in Hanau, the location of one of the largest refugee camps, thirty Lithuanian artists exhibited their works. In 1949, a number of Lithuanian refugee-artists succeeded in obtaining permission to organize a large Travelling Art Exhibition. This consisted of about three hundred works of art and began in Amsterdam and concluded in New York. Later, these works formed the nucleus of the Čiurlionis Gallery established in Chicago in 1957.¹⁵⁷

Many group and individual art exhibitions were arranged at Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Tübingen, Baden-Baden, Würzburg, Wiesbaden, Augsburg, Nürtingen, Konstanz and at other large refugee centres. In 1949 Viktoras Petravičius organized another Baltic Graphic Art Exhibition, this time in Rome. It consisted of works by him and by Vytautas Jonynas and Estonian, Edward Wiiralt (1898-1954). A number of solo exhibitions, including works by Adomas Galdikas, Vytautas Jonynas and Vytautas Kasiulis were held in Paris. Antanas Rūkštelė and Česlovas Janušas, both prolific realist painters, organized numerous solo exhibitions within the boundaries of West Germany. In order to educate the younger generation, a number of artists began to set up art schools, studios and courses in the camps or in rented rooms in nearby towns. In 1946, Vaclovas Ratas established an art studio Studija and Antanas Rūkštelė set up art classes in Schwäbisch Gmünd; Juozas Kaminskas (1898-1957) began teaching in the Hanau displaced persons camp. In various other camps, individuals and groups taught weaving and folk-art carving.

The single greatest visual art achievement of post-war cultural activity was probably the establishment in Freiburg-im-Breisgau in 1946 of L'École des

¹⁵⁷ Paulius Jurkus, 'Lietuvių dailė užsienyje' (Lithuanian Art Abroad) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, pp. 709-10

Arts et Métiers (The Institute of Applied Art).¹⁵⁸ Using his connections with the occupying French forces in the French zone of southern Germany, Professor Vytautas Jonynas, a prominent graphic artist who in 1938 had been made an officer of the Legion of Honour by the French Government, received permission to establish the school.¹⁵⁹ He organized a teaching staff of sixteen artists as well as premises and teaching materials. There were departments of graphic art, drawing, painting, weaving, ceramics and sculpture. The school operated until 1949 and was attended annually by up to 150 students, mostly Lithuanian. Many became well known artists and later worked successfully in other parts of the world; some became art historians and art critics. Twelve former students and three lecturers from the institution migrated to Australia.

In 1947, a group of artists founded the Lithuanian Institute of Arts, also in Freiburg-im-Breisgau.¹⁶⁰ Among its founding members were Vaclovas Ratas, Teisutis Zikaras and Aleksandras Marčiulionis, all of whom later worked in Australia. The Institute's aim was to foster Lithuanian art in all its forms, and it assisted in the organization of prestigious art exhibitions locally and abroad. In 1950 it transferred to the USA where it has continued its activities.

Despite a great shortage of paper in post-war Europe and difficulties in obtaining permission to publish in foreign languages, Lithuanian artists succeeded in publishing some books of artistic works. In 1947 they published 40 *Woodcuts* which includes work by Paulius Augius, Viktoras Petravičius, Vaclovas Ratas and Teleforas Valius. Alfonsas Dargis illustrated *Lietuviškų vestuvių papročiai* (Lithuanian Wedding Customs) and Paulius Augius used one hundred and one woodcuts as illustrations for a poem, *Eglė žalčių karalienė* (Egle, the Queen of the Serpents). As well, a monograph, *Vytautas Jonynas*, was published with woodcuts and drawings by Jonynas and text in French by Alexis Rannit. In 1948, Adolfas Vaičaitis, who later migrated to Australia, published a folio entitled *Seven Lithographs*. A fairytale publication, *Twelve Ravens*, illustrated with nine woodcuts, was the work of Vaclovas Ratas. Some forty other illustrated books published dealt mainly with folk art.

As can be seen, the 'exile period' in Germany between 1944 and 1950 witnessed a remarkable outburst of creative activity among Lithuanian refugees. Visual artists played a significant role and, along with writers, poets, choirs, dancers and theatre groups, represented Lithuanian culture. This period also provided the opportunity for artists to have contact with the great art of Europe of earlier times. Although some museums were still closed and others had been ravaged by war, there were many galleries filled with treasures from the great

¹⁵⁸ Vytautas Alseika, 'Freiburgo lietuviai' (Lithuanians in Freiburg) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 6, p. 388

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 478

¹⁶⁰ Paulius Juskus, 'Lietuvių dailė užsienyje' (Lithuanian Art Abroad) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 710

established in Schwebisch Grönd, Dillingen and Wiesbaden. As well, during the 1945-49 period in Germany, Lithuanians established seventy-one kindergartens, 112 primary and thirty-one secondary schools. Thus, everyone had opportunities to learn or to teach, and to participate in this multi-faceted, cultural mini-world. It is interesting to note that in 1948, only 12% of the Lithuanian adults in Germany were classified as unqualified.⁷²

During the exile period in Germany, a number of publishing houses were established, the most productive being Patria which published a large number of newspapers, journals, bulletins and books. Among these were 216 books of prose and poetry.⁷³ Vaclovas Ratas and Adolfas Vaičaitis, both future migrants to Australia, initiated the publication of books on art. As well as academic activities, there were many cultural and sports programmes in which camp dwellers were able to participate. Choral and folk-dance groups were particularly active under the guidance of conductors, music teachers and instrumentalists. Alfonsas Mikulskis and Stepas Sodeika established large choirs, orchestras and folk-dance groups which frequently toured Germany performing to Allied Forces and Lithuanian and German audiences. The first Song Festival was held in Würzburg in 1947 in spite of travel restrictions. From nearby camps, approximately 400 singers participated in this event. In 1947, Lithuanians staged in Detmold an opera performance of Rossini's *Barber of Seville*,⁷⁴ and a ballet performance of Delibes' *Coppelia* in Augsburg.⁷⁵ These were the first major events staged by Lithuanians in exile.

Most camps had sports teams, the most popular sports being basketball, volleyball and table-tennis. In the International Refugee Sports Olympics held in Nürnberg in 1948, Lithuanians collected the greatest number of points for overall performance and won first place out of the seventeen nationalities competing.⁷⁶ All these activities did much to keep alive national traditions and to sustain and re-kindle hope for an early return to a free Lithuania. National respect and individual self-esteem were maintained amid often unfriendly surroundings and uncertainty, overcoming to a very large degree the demoralising reality of camp life.

⁷² Alseika, 'D.P.', *ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 148

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 155

⁷⁴ Santvaras, 'Operos teatras' (Theatre of Opera) *ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 683

⁷⁵ Painters Leonas Žygas and Elena Kepalas were principal dancers; Vaclovas Ratas was in charge of scenery and his wife Regina was one of the ballerinas. All were future Australians.

⁷⁶ Alseika, 'D.P.', in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 5, p. 157

masters and which could be visited. As well, a number of travelling art exhibitions, especially from France, had a strong impact. Lithuanian artists expanded their horizons and became more open to experimentation in art styles. Their palette brightened; their technique became more daring; new influences diminished their dependence on the old schools and their feeling for folk art. Crowded life in the camps had the effect of enabling everybody to participate in almost any chosen cultural enterprise. Art exhibitions became affairs that concerned the whole camp and were accessible to all; attendance at and interest in exhibitions were great. Povilas Reklaitis, an art historian, wrote: 'For the new emigration the art exhibition increasingly meant what for the old emigration the church had meant.'¹⁶¹

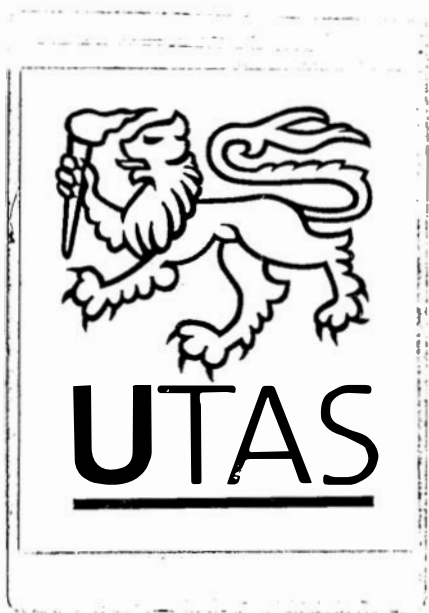
In the camps former teachers as well as the leaders and elected officers of the new communities emphasised the idea that Lithuanian refugees should regard the exile period as brief and as an opportunity to learn abroad what under normal circumstances would be expensive or unavailable. The command by the Allied Forces that German tertiary institutions must accept 10% of displaced persons opened to many the doors to continuing education. Even though L'Ecole des Arts et Metiers was almost exclusively a Lithuanian institution, it was in the French zone where living conditions, particularly food rationing, were severe. Many students chose, therefore, to study at German schools in the American zone where nutrition was of a higher standard. Art schools in Stuttgart, Augsburg, Munich and Hanau were most popular and taught in the prevailing German Expressionist style with only rare exceptions such as the abstract experimentation of Willi Baumeister in Stuttgart. The exact number of Lithuanians who studied in German art schools is not known, but is probably in the vicinity of three hundred.

The years in Germany were spent productively and in high spirits by many, in spite of psychological and material hardship. Lithuanian community leaders did all they could to protect the refugees, particularly young students, from political anxiety and uncertainty. People were encouraged to look forward to and gain knowledge and skills for an imminently free Lithuania, and the temporariness of the existing grim situation was frequently emphasised. When massive overseas migration began in 1947 attendance at art and craft courses diminished and private art schools and studios closed as their founders and tutors left Europe. L'École des Arts et Métiers, however, as mentioned, existed until 1949.¹⁶² A number of cultural institutions such as the Lithuanian Institute of Art, were transferred to the USA. The majority of artists and art students

¹⁶¹ Povilas Reklaitis, 'Die bildende Kunst der Litauischen Emigration 1945-1966' in *Acta Baltica*. Vol. 6, 1966, p. 253

¹⁶² Alseika, 'Freiburgo lietuviai' (Lithuanians in Freiburg) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 6, p. 388

migrated to America, others to various other overseas countries. Not all were able to continue as artists: art from then on became a pursuit for only the most determined.



CHAPTER 3

LITHUANIANS IN AUSTRALIA

*And I wish for a friend who will help me to face
All the storms of my heart and will soothe my heart's pain.*

Maironis (1862-1932)
(Translated by Lionginas Paužusis)

EXODUS FROM EUROPE

In 1947, migrant-recruiting commissions from various Western countries began operating in Western Germany in response to the International Relief Organization's anxiety to solve the problem of 'displaced persons'. Most Lithuanian refugees' hopes of returning to a free country were alive and strong because they felt that justice would eventually prevail. However, the ever-present fear of enforced repatriation to a Soviet-controlled state, the overcrowding in Europe, the unfriendly attitude of most Germans and the lack of prospects in their present situation were the major factors that made migration abroad appear to many refugees a temporary solution to their immediate problems.

As the Lithuanian emigration of Tsarist days had been mainly to the United States, many of the Lithuanians in the camps had relatives there, which was accordingly their first choice. The Americans, however, had a very tight quota, so the Lithuanians were forced to take Australia. Australia required young, strong, healthy workers and all accepted were classified as 'labourers' or 'domestics'.¹⁶³

About 30,000 Lithuanians, including a large number of academics, professionals and artists, were able to migrate to the USA. A further 20,000 went to Canada, 10,000 to Australia, 5,000 to South America, 2,000 to Great Britain, 2,000 to various European countries, while a number, unable to meet necessary health and age requirements, had to remain in Germany.

¹⁶³ B and A Biršky's, 'The Lithuanians in Australia', in *The Baltic Peoples in Australia*, ed. Michael Cigler, AE Press, Blackwood, 1986, p. 18

MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government's recruiting team, in addition to political screening, conducted thorough medical examinations with X-rays, and blood tests and physical fitness checks. Few suffered from venereal disease but a number were suffering from tuberculosis. Australia's Displaced Persons Scheme provided free passage but required migrants to sign two-year work contracts.

The first refugees to arrive in Australia in November, 1947 were single Baltic males whose average age was twenty-four years. They had been selected largely because their Northern European features resembled the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁶⁴ Arrivals over the next few months were young single women and young married couples, almost all of whom were also of Baltic origin. In 1947 Lithuanian males in Australia outnumbered females thirteen to one; by 1948, the ratio was three to one. The educational levels of Baltic males on their arrival between 1947 and 1950 and Australian males of the same age are indicated in the following table (figures given as percentages):¹⁶⁵

<u>Education Level Reached</u>	<u>Prim</u>	<u>Inter</u>	<u>Matric</u>	<u>Tertiary</u>	<u>Grads</u>
Lithuanians	63	7	15	6	9
Latvians	48	20	17	6	9
Estonians	43	21	20	5	11
Australians	48	41	7	2	2

On their way to Australia, the young Lithuanians had enthusiastically formed choral and folk-dance groups; on arrival they responded to the official speeches of welcome, often delivered by the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, by giving cultural performances. The general feeling among the newcomers was one of great relief: they felt that Australia would afford them political safety and religious freedom, guaranteed employment and an abundance of food. Most believed that their period of exile would be brief and would allow them to experience new places, different ways of life and the opportunity to learn English. Although Australians' reaction to and acceptance of the newcomers was often only lukewarm, this was not unexpected and, in

¹⁶⁴ It seems that refugees' physical appearance played a role, even after arrival in Australia. On 26 Dec 1976, Mr Walter Jona, at the time Victorian State Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, speaking at the Dallas Brooks Hall in Melbourne during the Lithuanian Days opening ceremony extolled the cultural performances of Lithuanians and their contribution to Australian society and went on to say: '... but the best thing about you Lithuanians is that on the street you are indistinguishable from ordinary Australians ... and the worst ... is that there are not enough of you'. The author was present in the audience.

¹⁶⁵ E.F. Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, ANU Press, 1988, p. 132

any case, was outweighed by the Lithuanian newcomers' sense of respite from the horrors of war and its aftermath.

Early Problems

Regardless of professional qualifications, intellectual abilities and backgrounds or training and skills, migrants were designated to the least appealing jobs. Men were sent to work in quarries and mines or to cut sugar-cane or timber, while women were required to work in lowly jobs in factories and hospitals. The work-place interaction between the newcomers and Australians often caused friction: many Australians regarded the migrant workers as unwelcome competitors and were often irritated by foreign languages, accents and customs. George Johnston writes:

Deeply moved by the injustice and suffering in Europe, the Australian offered succour genuinely and generously, and, having made the gesture, had no idea how to follow it up. He clung defensively to his own kith and kin and angrily criticised the refugees for sticking together with their own kind ... [U]nable to speak any foreign language himself ... the Australian generally resented such a shortcoming in others.¹⁶⁶

From time to time even the most innocent behaviour aroused indignation. One Australian expressed the concern typical of many in a letter to the Editor of the *Adelaide Advertiser* in 1950:

...we find migrants, irrespective of where they may be, invariably reverting to their native tongue when conversing among themselves. We hear of them acquiring radios that must be capable of overseas [foreign] reception. We are proudly told of a migrant using a country printing press to publish and circulate a newspaper in an alien language. Strange names, too, appear on goods in shops. Will the migrant discard his native tongue before it becomes necessary for Australians to take up the study of a foreign language? ¹⁶⁷

The situation was further aggravated by most Australians' scant knowledge of overseas politics. Many divided the newcomers into two categories: Nazis and Communists. As the Balts were refugees from both political systems they were often regarded with double suspicion. Probably the greatest friction was caused by many migrants' reluctance to join trade unions. For many Australian workers it was incomprehensible that anyone should refuse to support an institution established to guard the interests of workers. The political refugees having escaped from totalitarian regimes were wary of

¹⁶⁶ George Johnston, *The Australians*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1966, p. 106

¹⁶⁷ A.Les.Ellis, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 2 June 1950

militant unions, some of which were Communist-dominated at that time, and the migrants' point of view was seldom sought. Under such stressful circumstances, many host and newcomer groups divided even further and migrants held more closely to their own circles.

Mixed Marriages: In the early fifties, mixed marriages between Australians and the new arrivals began to occur. These often met with disapproval from families on both sides: Lithuanians often regarded the Lithuanian partner in a mixed marriage as lost to the Lithuanian community; Australians often saw the 'foreigner' as a somewhat undesirable addition to the family. As time went by, both sides became more tolerant. Between 1951 and 1958, of Lithuanian marriages in Australia, 44% were endogenous, 42% were between Lithuanians and Australians and 14% were of Lithuanians with persons of other ethnic origin.¹⁶⁸ As time went by, mixed marriages continued to be common so that by the eighties, Lithuanian largely ceased to be the principal language of most younger households. Although children of some mixed marriages did participate in dancing groups, Scouts activities and sporting teams, there was a general move away from such families' close involvement in Lithuanian activities.

Psychological Stresses: About 20% of the single Lithuanian men who migrated to Australia remained single and many experienced psychological trauma to a greater degree than others in the Lithuanian community. Single Baltic males¹⁶⁹ were also affected by alcoholism, depression and paranoid schizophrenia.¹⁷⁰ Many reasons have been given for the deteriorated mental health of many refugees -- anxiety, loss of social status, pressure of assimilation, loneliness and so on. However, what may really have been the major causes were overlooked: the loss of homeland, limitations of personal development in their new situation and continuing fear of Soviet persecution. Soviet authorities persisted in regarding refugees as traitors to the State, as witnesses with embarrassing tales to tell about the Soviet regime, that is, as potential anti-Soviet propagandists for whom punishment should be torture, deportation to Siberia or even death. Refugees, even in Australia, feared that reprisals could be directed not only to individuals but collectively and could affect families, friends and colleagues here and in Lithuania. Alarm over relentless Soviet threats often caused people to change their names, to retreat into anonymity and, in some cases, to live in seclusion. In 1968 it was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that a Lithuanian couple had lived in hiding for

¹⁶⁸ Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, p. 240

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 233

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 229

seventeen years in a cave near Sydney because they feared they would be deported.¹⁷¹ Although an extreme case, it illustrates the degree to which intimidation was part of everyday existence. Because of their fear, almost all Lithuanians in Australia avoided direct contact with their homeland until after the death of Stalin in 1953. Until then, their monitoring of Soviet radio broadcasts served to heighten their anxiety.

Varied Decisions: By the time they had completed their mandatory work contracts, most working-class Lithuanians were reasonably settled in their new country and were generally satisfied with material conditions in Australia. They had broadened their social contacts and had gained some familiarity with English. Children were receiving additional educational opportunities at Lithuanian weekend schools and most families were involved in various ethnic cultural activities. However, many with previous professional training, at first happy with the political security afforded them in Australia and willing to fulfil two-year work contracts by way of repayment, became pessimistic about their futures, fearing that their qualifications would never be recognised in this country. Information reaching them from the USA told of more favourable conditions there for professionals. As soon as they were eligible for Australian citizenship and thus able to hold a passport,¹⁷² many re-migrated. By 1958 some 2,000 Lithuanians, 20% of those in Australia, had left for the USA.¹⁷³

THOSE WHO REMAINED IN AUSTRALIA

Of the 8,000 Lithuanians who remained in Australia, some 2,500 settled in suburban Sydney. Approximately 1,500 went to Melbourne, about 1,200 to Adelaide, and the remainder to Brisbane, Canberra, Newcastle, Geelong and places in Tasmania.¹⁷⁴ Only Sydney had an already existing Lithuanian community comprised of people who had arrived in Australia before World War II: there were some sixty members organized into the Australian Lithuanian Society.¹⁷⁵ President of the society, Antanas Baužė, visited the new arrivals while they were in reception camps and several times travelled to Fremantle to greet them upon their arrival in Australia. His encouragement and advice was warmly received. His Sydney home was always open for migrants and he and his family gave staunch support to newly arrived Lithuanians.

¹⁷¹ *Mūsų Pastogė*, Sydney, 30 Sept. 1968

¹⁷² Refugees who came to Australia in the early post-war period were generally stateless and therefore did not hold valid passports.

¹⁷³ *Metraštinis*. Vol. 1, p. 56

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*

¹⁷⁵ As told to the author by Ona Baužė 6 Jan. 1989.

Setting up Community and Cultural Organizations

Most newcomers joined the Australian Lithuanian Society and, over time, many assumed leadership roles. In 1950 the Society was re-organized and became officially known as the Australian Lithuanian Community.¹⁷⁶ This body in Australia is divided into local units usually existing wherever Lithuanians are living. Local communities are headed by elected councils which are affiliated with the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council (FALCC).¹⁷⁷ The major task of all local Lithuanian Councils is the overseeing of educational and cultural matters: the organization of weekend schools, libraries, art exhibitions, concerts, commemorative events and functions to honour visiting dignitaries and performers, and so on. Biennial conventions are held, during which delegates from the various communities form the Supreme Australian Lithuanian Community Council (SALCC)¹⁷⁸ to discuss general issues and draft decisions and resolutions for future activities. All Lithuanian Federal Councils from around the world are affiliated to the World Lithuanian Community Council, based in the USA.¹⁷⁹

Beginning in 1950, annual FALCC and SALCC conventions were held from time to time in the major Australian cities and, concurrently, various artistic programmes were presented. In 1960 it was decided that regular biennial week-long festivals, to be known as Lithuanian Days, should be organized on a rotational basis in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. These festivals include literature and poetry evenings, drama performances, folk dancing, choral singing, talent quests, art and craft exhibitions and sports competitions. Concurrently, meetings of the Federal and Supreme Councils and of other organizations have continued to take place.

Lithuanian Press in Australia: Over time, there have been three Lithuanian weeklies and several less regular magazines. Altogether, there have been twenty-two Lithuanian newspapers, magazines and bulletins published in Australia,¹⁸⁰ three in English: a quarterly journal, *Voice of Freedom* which began publication in 1961 was re-named the *News Digest International* in 1963 and still continues regular publication, its editor being Jonas Kedys; the *Baltic Herald* is published in Sydney; and until 1990, the *Baltic News*¹⁸¹ was produced in Hobart with Algimantas Taškūnas as editor. The aim of Baltic publications in English has been to inform the English-speaking public about

¹⁷⁶ Australijos lietuvių bendruomenė

¹⁷⁷ Australijos lietuvių bendruomenės krašto valdyba

¹⁷⁸ Australijos lietuvių bendruomenės krašto taryba

¹⁷⁹ Pasaulio lietuvių bendruomenės valdyba

¹⁸⁰ Bronius Straukas in *Metai*, Vol. 2, p. 51

¹⁸¹ These are combined publications by representatives of the three Baltic states.

the political, social and economic situation in Lithuania and the other Baltic countries.

Australian Lithuanian Catholic Federation: Within the Australian Lithuanian community there have existed about two hundred organizations and associations, the largest of which is the Australian Lithuanian Catholic Federation, established in 1948 as the Lithuanian Catholic Association and re-organized and re-named in 1954. The Federation has published a weekly paper, *Tėviskės Aidai* (Echoes of Homeland) since 1956.

Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Groups: These bodies operate in the larger communities. Their major concern is the care of sick and lonely Lithuanians in Australia and Germany, and they also provide catering services for functions held by other Lithuanian associations.

Ramovė (Retired Lithuanian Soldiers) Association: In larger Lithuanian communities, former members of the Lithuanian armed forces and partisan groups have formed Ramovė Associations. Members meet for social interaction and often give financial support to other organizations.

The Australian Lithuanian Cultural Foundation: Established in Melbourne in 1948, the foundation had branches in Adelaide and Geelong. Its aim was to prepare curricula for weekend schools, to collect books for Lithuanian libraries and to organize local, national and international cultural events. It ceased in 1961 when these tasks were taken over by local Australian Lithuanian Community Councils.

Australian Lithuanian Foundation: In Melbourne in 1972 the Australian Lithuanian Foundation was established. Its aim was to foster greater awareness among Lithuanians, especially the young, of Lithuanian history, literature and the arts by providing financial support for cultural activities and awarding prizes for academic works based on Lithuanian themes. These incentives assisted many of the choirs, musical ensembles and dance groups which are still functioning to the present time. Most of the larger communities have mixed choirs which play an important role in local celebrations and church services. They often give concert performances and always participate in the biennial Lithuanian Days.

Literary Associations: In Sydney, the Pen Club was established in 1953; the Discussion Club began in Newcastle in 1954; and in Melbourne, the

Journalists Association was founded in 1956 and the Čiurlionis Discussion Club in 1962. Members of these groups gave lectures, held seminars, wrote articles on literature and the arts for local Lithuanian newspapers, organized events to commemorate famous writers and poets, and conducted literary gatherings.

Publications by Lithuanians: Between 1951 and 1985, Lithuanian writers in Australia published fifty-two works in Lithuanian. As well, during the fifties, five works were translated into Lithuanian from the original French, Flemish and Russian. In 1961, Vaclovas Ratas was an art editor of the first volume of *Metraštis* (Lithuanian Chronicle) which comprises 292 pages and contains historical accounts of many Lithuanian organizations. In 1967 he edited *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, an illustrated volume of the major works by contemporary artists. In 1972, an attractive publication, *Blezdینگėlės prie Torrenso* (Lithuanian Dance on the Banks of the River Torrens) was compiled by the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council to document its activities from 1947 to 1972. The publication was sponsored by visiting American Juozas Bačiūnas, later known as J.T. Bachunas, and was published in the USA. Between 1957 and 1985 the Catholic Federation in its Melbourne publishing house produced about twenty-four booklets.¹⁸² The subjects include hymns, national songs and church masses, as well as several studies on Lithuanian culture taken from material previously published in the Catholic weekly newspaper, *Tėviškės aidai*.

Musical Groups: Song has always had a special place in Lithuanian culture with village, and, later, choir groups an integral part of life. This tradition has been continued in Australia where choirs have been formed wherever numbers of Lithuanians live. Many vocal trios, quartets and double quartets have also appeared, sometimes only briefly, for the Lithuanian community.

Theatre: In 1951, theatrical groups were established in Melbourne and Adelaide; in 1954, in Sydney. Adelaide also had until 1962 a Theatre-Studio which trained actors and staged at least two dramatic performances each year. Since that time it has functioned solely as a theatre company. In Sydney, a Children's Theatre, established by writer Ava Saudargas, began in 1953 with pupils from the Weekend School and from Scouts groups.

Dance Groups: National dance groups, so popular with Lithuanians in post-war Germany, maintained their appeal during transit and early days of

¹⁸² Father Pranas Vascris in *Metraštis*, Vol. 2, pp. 66-67

settlement in Australia and continue to be active. They form a colourful and popular part of Lithuanian cultural programmes and participate in National Dancing Festivals during Lithuanian Days.

Scouts Organization: Branches of the Lithuanian Scouts Organization are active in the larger areas of settlement. Annual jamborees are held and attended by Scouts from all states.

Sport: Sporting activities among young people of Lithuanian descent are particularly popular. The Lithuanian Sports Association co-ordinates annual sports festivals at which basketball, volleyball and table tennis are the most popular events. It is not unusual to find Australian players in Lithuanian sports teams. Chess clubs are linked to most sports associations.

Professional and Semi-Professional Organizations: Among these have been organizations uniting Lithuanian teachers, students, physicians, architects, engineers, foresters, lawyers and so on. Such organized activity seems characteristic of Lithuanian society, perhaps more so than of most other nationalities. A correspondent to *Mūsų Pastogė* from Guthega, a small town near Mt. Kosciuszko, sent to work on the Snowy Mountains Development Scheme, wrote: 'When there were about twenty of our countrymen, the idea arose to organize ourselves ... so we established an Australian-Lithuanian Community Council of the Snowy Mountains, a branch of FALCC ... and a basketball team.'¹⁸³ In most communities, organizations continue to function, but generally with decreasing membership and fewer activities. Most centres have their own community buildings, called Lithuanian Houses, often built by voluntary labour: Sydney acquired its Lithuanian House in 1954, Adelaide in 1957, Melbourne in 1958, Geelong in 1959, Canberra in 1963, Brisbane in 1972 and Perth in 1980.

Women in the Lithuanian Community: It was not until the late seventies, by which time most had raised their families, that women nominated and were elected to community councils. From the time of their arrival in Australia, however, women have played a highly significant role in the cultural life of the Lithuanian community: most teachers at weekend schools were women; dance and theatre groups were generally led by women; and a greater number of women than men participate in choirs and other musical groups.

¹⁸³ *Metraštis*, Vol. I, p. 205

Lithuanian Credit Society: In 1961, a group of accountants living in Melbourne formed the Lithuanian Co-Operative Credit Society, Talka (Collective Assistance). Branches opened in Adelaide in 1975 and in Sydney in 1978. Although Talka is a commercial institution, its primary aim is to provide financial aid to needy countrymen and sponsorship for cultural activities rather than to make large profits.

Lithuanian Court of Honour: This was established so that Lithuanians in Australia might be saved public embarrassment. The Courts of Honour are elected bodies under the auspices of local Lithuanian Community Councils and their prime function is to deal with minor accusations and complaints allegedly harmful to individual reputations. The privacy of the Court of Honour provides opportunity for individual Lithuanians to relieve tensions and overcome misunderstandings. Inter-organizational disagreements are also dealt with in the privacy of the Federal Court of Honour. The most severe judgement is the ordering of a public apology.

In the early years of post-war migration, many Lithuanians enthusiastically gave priority to establishing organizations, to children's education and to working together to acquire community houses. Weekend schools lacked neither students nor teachers. Commemorative events and theatrical performances in the fifties attracted large audiences. National day observances were generally marked by religious services, the laying of wreaths at Australian war memorials to honour the fallen, speeches by community leaders and varied artistic programmes. It can be seen that Lithuanians in the fifties and sixties were part of a stable, cohesive community.

Unforeseen Community Disruption

In the early 70s there was an intensification of USSR participation in cultural exchange programmes with Australia. After several visits by the Russian Ballet and the Red Army Choir, Baltic refugees in Australia were alarmed when they believed they identified Soviet spies among the visiting groups. Next, a number of persons believed only to be purporting to be journalists and scientists visited from Soviet Lithuania and made contact with several Lithuanians in Sydney. This raised suspicion among members of the Lithuanian community who believed that such meetings, although now known to have been brief and purely social, had sinister overtones. The community reacted by splitting into two hostile divisions in a way that had never before happened. The seat of the

Federal Lithuanian Council was transferred to Adelaide from Sydney where it had operated since its formation. Plans were made for the Council to move henceforth in rotation to other Australian cities. The editor of the weekly community newspaper *Mūsų Pastogė* was accused of collaboration and replaced. Activists collected signatures on petitions which condemned 'collaborationists' and the Church warned of secret infiltrators within the community. Old friendships were broken, families quarrelled and associations replaced office bearers suspected of collaborating with the Soviets. It had become possible at this time to visit Lithuania and the few who took advantage of the opportunity were met on their return to Australia by the stubborn indignation of the 'purists'. This hostility continued for several years until an unprecedented event in Australian politics paved the way for a re-uniting of the community.

In 1974 Baltic people in Australia were deeply shocked by a *Tas* newsagency report that Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam had accorded *de jure* recognition of the USSR's occupation of the Baltic States. This single political gesture caused many Baltic migrants to lose confidence in Australian foreign policy and in the Labor Party. It was widely feared that the Australian Government would also acknowledge Soviet laws relating to citizenship. Such laws were hard to interpret and, furthermore, open to changing interpretation by the communists. The Soviet law stated that 'all those who on November 7, 1917, were subjects of the former Russian empire' were regarded as citizens of the USSR.¹⁸⁴ Moscow decrees at various times broadening the concept of USSR citizenship. Decrees promulgated between 1945 and 1947 were especially alarming to Baltic people: USSR citizens were defined as 'persons who had once held citizenship and had later lost it, and their children'. Since many Lithuanians in exile had parents born prior to 1917 when the Baltic States were part of the Russian Empire,¹⁸⁵ they feared that they also were considered to have USSR citizenship and hence were under threat of enforced repatriation. Soviet law concerning 'dual citizenship' was equally vague and offered no security even to Baltic people who had become Australian citizens.

The impact on the Lithuanian community of the *de jure* recognition was so great that it considerably reduced the hostility of the two sectors, although another decade was to pass before the Catholic Church sanctioned parishioners' contact with those still living in Lithuania. Only then were the community's differences mitigated.

Following two years of fear and apprehension by Baltic people living in Australia, Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in 1976 reversed the earlier

¹⁸⁴ F.J.M.Feldbrugge, *Encyclopedia of Soviet Law*. Oceania Publications Inc., Dobbsferry, New York, 1973, pp. 108-110.

¹⁸⁵ Independence from Russia was gained by the Baltic States in 1918.

decision made by the Labor Government and, in line with the policies of other Western countries, announced *de facto* recognition of the Baltic States.

Australian Lithuanians in Recent Times

By the eighties most Lithuanians in Australia were well established, the majority owning homes and cars. Larger communities had acquired Lithuanian Houses which served as venues for community activities. However, attendances at these had decreased significantly, due in large part to the advancing ages and the deaths of first-generation members. The lifespan of the average Lithuanian male refugee proved to be shorter than that of his Australian counterpart: 63.8 compared with 69.9 years respectively. In the case of females the ratio was 67.8 to 76.8 years.¹⁸⁶

Most second-generation Lithuanians have received Lithuanian language tuition and can speak and write, but generally with a restricted vocabulary. Most are proud of their cultural background and, even in mixed marriages, retain a number of traditional customs. Those of the third generation seldom speak or even understand Lithuanian, although many were taught at an early age by their grandparents.

Since the middle seventies there has been a steady decline in attendance at weekend schools even though Federal government assistance is now provided for ethnic education. Folk-dance and Scouts groups have survived, although there has been a reduction in membership.

In many ways, first-generation refugees have often felt a sense of disillusionment: not only was their homeland lost but any hope of return seemed highly improbable. A loss of faith in the Atlantic Charter and in the commitment of Western democratic nations to political justice and human rights grew as time went by and the plight of the Baltic nations seemed to be consistently ignored. The self-imposed mission of many refugees to warn of the evils of Communism was unsuccessful as many Australians had idealised notions of Communism. Others were generally politically complacent. Added to these worries, many refugees felt they had lost their children to a different culture, even though most young people are aware and proud of their Lithuanian background.

From the early post-World War II migration period, those born in Lithuania were the leaders of cultural activities and the financial backers of events and enterprises. Their numbers are dwindling year by year. The Australian census of 1986 revealed that there were 5,346 Lithuanians here who

¹⁸⁶ Monica Baltiutis, 'Lithuanians in Melbourne 1947-1980', B.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1981.

had been born in Lithuania and 13,730 of Lithuanian descent, amounting to 0.08% of the total Australian population.¹⁸⁷

Church attendance has declined proportionately to the deaths of first-generation Lithuanians. According to Father Pranas Vaseris of Melbourne 'the younger generation is not religious any more'.¹⁸⁸

As time has passed, many of the younger generation have become involved in secular community activities, their task made somewhat easier from the seventies when ethnic activities have received wider public and government sanction. Over the years, as Lithuanians have become assimilated, activities have become simpler and less frequent. In the nineties, the most popular community event is the biennial week-long Lithuanian Days Festival which provides opportunities to meet together to share cultural activities and to keep alive traditional Lithuanian customs and values.

COMPARISON OF AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN LITHUANIAN COMMUNITIES

It assists understanding of Australian developments to note the differences between Lithuanian communities in Australia and in America. In the USA, influenced strongly by previously existing Lithuanian political parties, Lithuanian migrants established many groups with political links. In Australia, Lithuanians disregarded parties that had existed in their homeland and, and tended to organize themselves on the less contentious bases of national origin, cultural activities and professional interests. Divisions occurred mainly with regard to religion, and even then only concerning the priority accorded religion in the social structure of the community.

Lithuanian refugees who arrived in the USA after World War II found conditions there markedly different from those met by Lithuanians who migrated to Australia. The major difference was probably the existence in America of long-established Lithuanian communities founded by migrants over several generations. It is estimated that about 1,000,000 Lithuanians migrated to America between 1795 and 1939.¹⁸⁹ Many had left Lithuania for America after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. A great many settled in the Boston-Baltimore-Chicago triangle, initially obtaining labouring jobs, for instance as coal-miners and slaughtermen. Although many had been landless rural workers, unskilled

¹⁸⁷ James Jupp, ed., *The Australian People*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1988, pp. 9, 69, 124.

¹⁸⁸ *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 265

¹⁸⁹ Constantine R. Jurgėla 'Lithuanians in the United States' in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, Vol. 6, p. 436

and illiterate, a high degree of organizational ability was evident, nevertheless, in their establishment of mutual aid societies set up to assist the injured, sick and widowed. Many were successful, too, in business ventures and became owners of corner stores, tailoring establishments, funeral parlours, restaurants and saloons, the last being used also as community meeting-houses.

More Active Role of the Lithuanian Catholic Church in America

In the more densely populated centres of Lithuanian settlement, and especially during the early years after migration to America in the 19th century, priests were often the only literate members of the community. They were instrumental in organizing church parishes, religious associations and schools, all named in honour of saints. The building of churches was a very high priority for 19th and early 20th century Lithuanians in America. Although the exact number of Lithuanian parishes established during the 19th century is not clear, it is known that in America in 1941 there were 124 parishes and 334 priests. By 1970, although there were six fewer parishes, the number of clergy had increased to 612.¹⁹⁰ There was also an undisclosed number of monks and nuns. In addition to churches, the Lithuanian Catholic Church in America has large building complexes, monasteries, convents, hospitals, primary and secondary schools, a seminary and various financial investments. Also, from the early years of this century, a number of Catholic foundations, first among them Motinė (Dear Mother) established by priests in 1900, have provided scholarships to hundreds of students and have supported members of their congregation during post-graduate study.¹⁹¹ This has ensured that there will always be highly educated, Catholic leaders.

The Lithuanian Catholic Church in Australia

By comparison, in Australia there is only one Lithuanian church and only six or seven priests.¹⁹² In Sydney and Melbourne, Catholic religious services are held in Australian churches; in Melbourne, Lithuanian Lutherans have a small chapel at Lithuanian House; and the only Lithuanian Catholic Church is situated in Adelaide. During forty years of life in Australia, only three Lithuanians have become clergymen: two from the second generation (one Catholic and one Protestant) and a third who became a Catholic priest at a mature age. It is clear that the role and power of the Catholic church in the Australian Lithuanian

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 441

¹⁹¹ Antanas Kučas, 'Jungtinės Amerikos Valstybės' (The United States of America) *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 10, p. 50

¹⁹² The number fluctuates because of inter-continent transfers.

community in no way compares with the role and power exerted by that church in the USA.

Lithuanian Community Organizations and Activities in America

During the latter part of the 19th century, a number of persecuted leaders of the Lithuanian National Movement sought refuge in the United States. One, Mykolas Tvarauskas, established the first Lithuanian newspaper in America, *Gazietė Lietuviška* (Lithuanian Gazette). These prominent people felt a need to unite Lithuanians and in 1889 formed the Lithuanian Alliance of America. In 1901, the Catholics broke away and formed the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Alliance in America which in 1906 was re-named the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Federation of America.¹⁹³

The setting-up of politically oriented associations in America was prompted by two major events: the 1905 revolution in Russia which had serious repercussions in Lithuania and the outbreak of World War I. In 1905, the Lithuanian Socialist Alliance was set-up in America; in 1914, the Lithuanian National League; in 1919, the Lithuanian Communist Federation of America; in 1927, the American Lithuanian National Centre; and in 1932 the Lithuanian Workers Association. Most of these organizations published newspapers reflecting their ideologies. Some are still issued: the socialist paper *Keleivis* (The Traveller), established 1905; *Naujienos* (The News), established 1914; the Catholic *Draugas* (Friend), established 1909 and *Darbininkas* (The Worker), established 1915; the liberal *Sandara* (Concord), established 1915; and the nationalist *Dirva* (The Field), established 1916.¹⁹⁴ It is interesting to note that there has not been a Communist newspaper, in the Russian sense of that word, published by Lithuanians in the USA.

During and after World War I, Lithuanians in America were active politically and financially in promoting the cause of Lithuanian independence. They sought publicity and support in the American press and in 1917 established an information bureau; they lobbied the US government, in 1918 requesting President Wilson to recognise the *de jure* independence of Lithuania.¹⁹⁵ Various Lithuanian organizations set up foundations to aid war victims and Lithuanian refugees in Russia. During Lithuania's period of independence (1918-1940), many American Lithuanians financially supported relatives in their native homeland. According to Lithuanian post-office records, approximately \$US4m was received annually by relatives.¹⁹⁶ In addition,

¹⁹³ Amerikos Lietuvių Romos Katalikų Federacija.

¹⁹⁴ Constantine R. Jurgėla 'Lithuanians in the United States' in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*. Vol. 6, p. 442

¹⁹⁵ The USA did not give *de jure* recognition until 1922.

¹⁹⁶ Jurgėla in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, Vol. 6, p. 445

money was donated for specific causes such as the building of churches, hospitals and schools in their homeland. Further support was given in the form of business investment.

Over time, a number of the American political organizations became less active, but in 1940, after the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, a renewal of political activity occurred. By this time there were many highly educated American Lithuanians and associations were re-established and, in 1941, united as one political body, the Lithuanian American Council (Amerikos Lietuvių Taryba). The Council published the *Lithuanian Bulletin* and reported regularly to American government bodies and the press on the true situation in occupied Lithuania. It also negotiated the inclusion of Lithuanian language programmes in the Voice of America and Free Europe radio broadcasts. Since the end of the war in 1945, the Council has worked vigorously to convince the US Government that Lithuanian refugees should be regarded as citizens of Lithuania, not of Russia. It has also actively opposed the enforced repatriation of refugees to Soviet-occupied countries.

In 1944, American Lithuanians responded to the plight of thousands of Lithuanian refugees in Western Europe by forming an important charitable body, the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America (Bendras Amerikos Lietuviu, Fondas). The value of food, clothes and medicine sent to refugees was estimated at around three million dollars.¹⁹⁷ The Relief Fund was instrumental also in arranging the affidavits guaranteeing shelter and work required of migrants to the USA. After World War II, some 30,000 Lithuanian refugees were sponsored by Lithuanians already living in the United States. The new arrivals formed their own organizations, the most important being the unifying and liberally oriented Lithuanian American Community established in New York in 1951 and still active.¹⁹⁸ Its aim is to foster Lithuanian culture by organizing song and folkdance concerts and various other cultural activities.

In 1955, the political body known as the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania moved to New York from West Germany.¹⁹⁹ It had been established in Lithuania in 1943 during the German occupation and consisted of representatives of political parties, the number of which varied between nine and fifteen.²⁰⁰ With the setting-up of the Supreme Committee, political activity intensified. When the Lithuanian American Community, in addition to its cultural activity, began to engage in politics, an on-going struggle

¹⁹⁷ Bendras Amerikos Lietuviu, Fondas (United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 2, p. 376

¹⁹⁸ Amerikos Lietuvių Bendruomenė

¹⁹⁹ Vyriausias Lietuvos Išlaisvinimo Komitetas (VLIKAS)

²⁰⁰ Juozas Audėnas, 'Vyriausias Lietuvos Išlaisvinimo Komitetas' (Supreme Committee) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 34, p. 286

between it and the Supreme Committee arose for ascendancy, the contest mainly taking the form of a struggle over the division of areas of activity.

Lithuanian Organizations in Australia

In Australia, the Lithuanian situation differs greatly from that in the United States. Here, the secular Australian Lithuanian Community is the supreme unifying body. The conservative Catholic Federation, the strongest faction in the total Lithuanian community, nevertheless operates within the parameters of the Australian Lithuanian Community. In contrast to the American Lithuanians who settled in large communities in close proximity to each other, Australian Lithuanian communities are smaller and geographically distanced from one another. Unlike America, Australia received no significant Lithuanian political leader. Probably for these reasons, there has been no re-establishment in Australia of political parties. Nor have strong religious units been formed. On arrival in Australia, Lithuanians did not find, as happened in America, established organizations with large financial resources. Since then, neither religious nor secular Lithuanian Australian groups have amassed wealth in the way that has occurred in American Lithuanian communities. Here, both groups have always been on a comparable (and modest) financial footing.

Lithuanian Cultural Organizations and Activities in America

As well as forming various associations for economic and political purposes, Lithuanians who migrated to America in the 19th and early 20th centuries also engaged in significant cultural activities. While their homeland was under Russian domination until 1918 and traditional Lithuanian cultural activities were restricted, Lithuanians in the USA were able to keep the culture alive by choral singing, folk-dancing and theatrical performances. The first play ever presented in the Lithuanian language was staged in 1889, not in Lithuania but in Plymouth, Pennsylvania.²⁰¹ A Lithuanian Song Festival (in which twelve choirs participated) took place in 1916 in Chicago.²⁰² The first Song Festival in Lithuania was in 1924.²⁰³

Following the declaration of Lithuanian independence in 1918, migration to the USA decreased and there was a lessening of Lithuanian cultural

²⁰¹ Stasys Santvaras, 'JAV lietuvių teatras' (Lithuanian Theatre in the USA), *ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 660

²⁰² Juozas Žilvičius, *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 241

²⁰³ Santvaras, 'Dainų šventės JAV' (Song Festivals in the USA), *ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 683

activity in America, possibly because Lithuanians there no longer felt a responsibility for keeping traditions alive in ways that had hitherto seemed necessary; and also because, with fewer Lithuanians arriving in the USA, cultural links with the homeland lacked vitality. After several years Lithuanian conductors, musicians and actors began to tour America and a revival of American Lithuanian choirs and theatre groups began.

Following World War II, with the arrival in the USA of Lithuanians in exile, among them many writers, poets and artists, the cultural scene was further re-awakened. The new arrivals formed active cultural groups which often took over editorial roles on existing American Lithuanian newspapers, produced new publications, set up a network of Lithuanian weekend schools and organized large-scale Folk-dance and Song Festivals. Since 1957, there has been a Lithuanian Opera Company based in Chicago. Performances are sung in Lithuanian and even though the company has always run at a financial loss, it continues to exist because of private donations and sponsorship from Lithuanian cultural organizations.

Since the establishment in Boston in 1953 of the Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press, thirty-seven volumes of *Lietuvių Enciklopedija* and the six-volume, English-language *Encyclopedia Lituanica* have been published. Lithuanian publishing houses in America have published many literary works in Lithuanian.

The majority of established artists who fled Lithuania during World War II eventually migrated to the USA. As well, the *Lietuvių Dailės Institutas* (Lithuanian Institute of Art), set up in Germany in the post-war period, was transferred to America.²⁰⁴ In 1956 the American Lithuanian Artists Association²⁰⁵ was established in Chicago and membership comprised visual artists, musicians, writers, actors and architects.²⁰⁶ Among prominent artists who have belonged to the association are painters Adomas Varnas and Adomas Galdikas, graphic artists Vytautas Jonynas and Viktoras Petravičius. With the inclusion of many second-generation artists, membership has increased to some three hundred. The artistic life of the Lithuanian community in America continues to be vigorous.

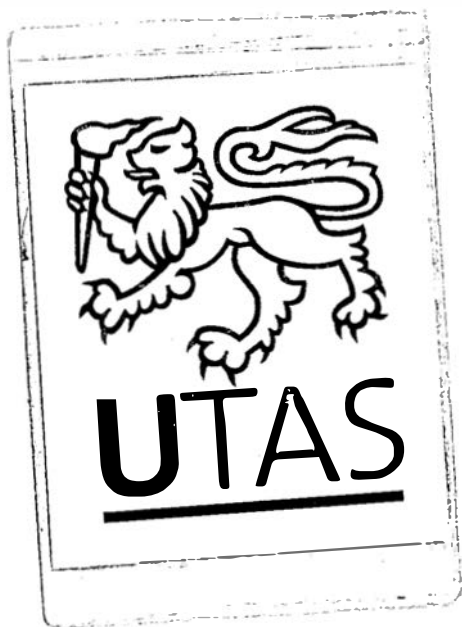
It can be seen that organizations and activities of post-World War II migrants to the USA and Australia continued to a great extent the patterns that had evolved in German refugee camps in the immediate post-war period. However, there have been many different outcomes, due in large part to the

²⁰⁴ Reklaitis, 'Menininkas' (Artist), *ibid.* Vol. 18, p. 207

²⁰⁵ Amerikos Lietuvių Dailininkų Sąjunga

²⁰⁶ Sonė Tomaricnė, 'Lietuvių literatūros Draugija', (American Lithuanian Artists Association) in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 16, p. 65

situations that the migrants found on their arrival in the respective countries. In the USA, there were already a large number of expatriate Lithuanians who during their considerable period of residency had been able to set up influential and financially viable organizations, the most powerful being the Catholic Church; in Australia, there was only a small community of 'old' Lithuanians with limited financial resources and no pre-existing church establishment.



CHAPTER 4

LITHUANIANS IN SYDNEY

*Our songs unsung, our glass unemptied,
The lights went out when life was fair...
The lights are out -- we're on our own.*

Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas (1893-1967)
(Translated by Peter Tempest).

The first groups of Lithuanian refugees to New South Wales arrived in 1947 and were housed initially in reception camps at Bathurst and Cowra where, while waiting to be assigned work, they attended English language classes arranged by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration. As in reception camps in other states, they began almost immediately to organize various cultural activities and to form sporting and scouts groups. A number of Lithuanian folk-art exhibitions were held and musical and folk-dance performances were given.²⁰⁷

Although many, particularly single men and women and married couples without children, soon left to carry out work contracts in other parts of Australia, the greatest number of Lithuanians began work in Sydney and its environs. It is recorded that in 1950 some 3000 Lithuanians were living in Sydney.²⁰⁸

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Unlike Lithuanians who went to other parts of Australia, Lithuanians arriving in Sydney found there an established community of 'old' migrant Lithuanians. The sixty or so members gave a warm welcome to the new arrivals, most of whom merged quickly with the earlier migrants. The 'old' Lithuanians, so-called regardless of actual age but because of their longer residency in Australia, had in 1929 formed an Australian Lithuanian Society. They had established a library and a small choir, and gathered regularly to

²⁰⁷ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, pp. 181-2, 204.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 256

celebrate national and religious days. Between 1932 and the outbreak of World War II the Australian Lithuanian Society kept in close contact with relatives and friends in independent Lithuania and received books, musical scores and newspapers as well as the magazine *Pasaulio lietuvis* (World Lithuanian), published in Lithuania specifically for expatriates by the Association for the Support of Lithuanians Abroad.

Between 1947 and 1949 Antanas Baužė (1889-1975), president of the society, visited the new arrivals on the ships and in reception camps.²⁰⁹ Baužė's home and shop in the Sydney suburb of Hurlstone Park became an unofficial counselling office, open to everyone at all times. Almost without exception, newcomers became members of the Australian Lithuanian Society.

Although the 'old' migrants had formed the society, because of their small numbers they had not published a Lithuanian newspaper. With the arrival of post-war refugees this idea was realised and in 1949 a weekly paper *Mūsų Pastogė* (Our Haven) began publication in Sydney. In 1954 the Department of Immigration required that one-quarter of the paper be printed in English and, not surprisingly this presented some difficulty. The paper's first editor was Juozas Žukauskas (1909-1986), a former journalist and solicitor.

In 1950, during the first Lithuanian convention in Australia, held in Sydney, the Australian Lithuanian Society was re-organized and became known as the Australian Lithuanian Community with *Mūsų Pastogė* as its official organ.²¹⁰ As Sydney at that time had the greatest number of Lithuanians in Australia, it was decided to establish there the national centre of Lithuanian activity to be known as the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council with local branches throughout Australia. As well, due to distances and, at that time, lack of private transport, it was decided to establish separate Lithuanian communities in the more densely populated suburbs of Bankstown and Cabramatta. While Sydney's Lithuanian Community Council had responsibility for supporting local weekend schools and libraries and for co-ordinating already established organizations such as choirs and folk-dance and theatre groups, the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council, in addition to co-ordination at a federal level, took responsibility for the publication for the weekly *Mūsų Pastogė*. The newspaper was run by community members for whom the idea of national identity was strong. However, Catholics, whose dominating loyalty was to their faith, strove for control of the paper. During the Council elections, the two parts of the community vied for victory for their respective candidates, and the resulting rivalry created a number of tense situations.²¹¹ The struggle

²⁰⁹ *ibid.* p. 25

²¹⁰ Nominal membership was accorded all persons born in Lithuania and a voluntary membership fee gave voting rights. Later, membership was extended to include those married to Lithuanians.

²¹¹ *Mėraštis*, Vol. 2, p. 372

lasted until 1956 when the Catholics abandoned hope of winning community elections and established their own weekly newspaper *Tėviškės Aidai* (Echoes of Homeland) in Melbourne where Catholics were relatively stronger.

The 'power struggle' mentioned above involved mainly senior male members of the community. Young persons were little affected and carried on with their usual activities.

LITHUANIAN CATHOLICS IN SYDNEY

Quite soon after their arrival in Sydney, Lithuanian Catholics formed the Lithuanian Catholic Association which in 1954 was re-organized into the Lithuanian Catholic Federation. Its aim was 'to nurture Catholic culture and strive for Catholic unity'.²¹² Within the organization, Lithuanian Catholic priests played leading roles. The communities of the federation organized religious celebrations, prayer nights, conventions and receptions for eminent Catholic visitors as well as cultural events, concerts and literary programmes. The last two usually included performances by persons from other sections of the Lithuanian community. The Catholic Federation has always seen itself in the forefront of the fight against the godlessness of Communism. Other aspects of Communist doctrine, such as socialism, are of less concern to them. Lithuanian Catholics were always strongly opposed to dialogue with Soviet-occupied Lithuania, believing that treacherous plans were hidden in any contact.

In 1954 Father Petras Butkus founded Ateitininkai (People of the Future) with the aim of fostering religious spirit and strengthening Catholic beliefs. Annual and commemorative religious events were held with lectures and artistic performances. Initial membership of about twenty remained constant for the next three decades and, due to the small numbers, events were often supplemented by contributions from members of the general Lithuanian community.²¹³

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Musical Groups

In 1954 Pranas Sakalauskas organized the first permanent Lithuanian mixed choir, Daina (Song), in Sydney. Its first conductor was Jonas Gaižauskas who was succeeded by Algis Plūkas, and from 1957 until his death in 1969

²¹² A. Grigaitis, *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 95

²¹³ *Meraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 262

Kazimieras Kavaliauskas was conductor. Bronius Kiveris took over in 1969. From its beginning, Daina has been a central part of Lithuanian cultural life, has performed regularly at commemorative functions and concerts and has often represented the Lithuanian community in Australian and other ethnic cultural programmes. In 1973 and 1974 the choir performed at the Sydney Opera House in the National Folkloric Festival. Although members are mostly first-generation migrants, since 1975 there have been second-generation conductors with qualifications from Australian institutions. These are Zita Belkus, b. 1953, Birutė Alekna, b. 1950 and Justinas Ankus, b. 1968. The choir's repertoire consists largely of harmonised songs and cantatas by Lithuanian composers.²¹⁴

In 1982 a musical group called Sutartinė was formed by women devoted to the preservation of Lithuanian folk songs in archaic form and unaffected by the influence of modern composers.²¹⁵

The Sydney choir and other cultural groups, including children's groups, have performed for Lithuanian communities in other Australian states, usually in the intervals between the biennial Lithuanian Days Festivals.

Folk-dance Groups

In 1949 Danutė Paltarokaitė, b. 1923, and Vytautas Aras (formerly Asevičius) b. 1922, established the first folk-dance group in Sydney. In the following year, the group was joined by a male choir and performed not only for the Lithuanian community but also for the Australian public at various places throughout Sydney as well as in Richmond, Penrith and other New South Wales towns. In January 1950, at the request of the Department of Immigration, the folk-dance group performed in the grounds of Parliament House in Canberra where they met the former French Ambassador to Lithuania M. Jean Gabriel Padovani (1893-1952), who had recently been appointed French Ambassador to Australia.²¹⁶

The Sydney dance group has continued actively until the present time, although naturally dancers and leaders have changed. In the late fifties Ava Saudargas, b. 1915, choreographer and playwright, took over the group and it became known as the Gintaras (Amber) Dance Group. With choreography by Saudargas and under the leadership of Kajus Kazokas, b. 1953, the group reached a high standard and has performed for the Australian public on many occasions including the popular Shell National Folkloric Festival at the Sydney

²¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 273

²¹⁵ *ibid.*

²¹⁶ See p.94

Opera House in 1977, 1978 and 1979, when they performed respectively. *Feast of Harvest*, *Joys of Spring* and *Traditional Lithuanian Wedding*.²¹⁷

In 1975 Marina Cox-Osinaite, b. 1934, organized children aged between twelve and fourteen years into a second folk-dance group *Sūkuryš* (The Whirl) which in 1982 had about sixty dancers.²¹⁸ While Gintaras has often presented Lithuania's cultural heritage to the Australian public, *Sūkuryš* has danced mainly for the Lithuanian community. In 1978 *Sūkuryš* included a sub-group of pre-school and primary-school children, divided into age sections.

Lithuanian Theatre

Since 1950, a number of *ad hoc* theatrical groups have performed short plays on special occasions. The first permanent theatrical group was organised in 1954 by Stasys Paulauskas (1925-1991) and in 1955 was named *Atžala* (Offshoot). Its aim was to produce one play annually. A different stage producer was selected for each production and, besides Paulauskas, included Paulius Rūtenis (1919-1983), Julius Dambrauskas (1926-1991), Stasys Skorulis, b. 1920, and Ksana Dauguvietė, b. 1912. Each offered a play, selected according to individual taste, resulting in a varied repertoire of presentations. Because of the difficulty in finding suitable Lithuanian plays, i.e. plays requiring only a limited number of actors and affordable scenery, nearly half the plays staged were translations from other languages, mainly English. Stage scenery was constructed and painted by Henry Šalkauskas, Vincas Stanevičius, Kestutis Ankus and Algis Plūkas.²¹⁹ Theatre performances remain very popular events in Lithuanian community life, with producers still finding no difficulty in recruiting willing actors.

In 1953, Ava Saudargas founded the Children's Theatre which staged a number of plays, based generally on fairy tales, written by her and with stage decorations created by artists Algirdas Šimkunas, Leonas Urbonas and Algis Plūkas. These were popular with children, parents and the general Lithuanian community. The children's theatre ceased activities in the seventies.²²⁰

²¹⁷ *Metraštis*, Vol. 2, p. 404

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 406

²¹⁹ Information gathered from theatre programmes.

²²⁰ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 273; Vol.2, p.415

Šviesa (Light) Organization

This secular association was particularly active in Sydney's Lithuanian community in the fifties. Established by Jonas Kedys in 1951, its committee and most of its members were university graduates; seminars, lectures and literary evenings were held regularly at a hall in the Sydney suburb of Milson's Point. From 1951 to 1958 over one hundred cultural events organised by Šviesa were attended by over five and a half thousand Lithuanians. As well as from Sydney, people came from Canberra, Wollongong, the Snowy Mountains, Melbourne and Adelaide. Many Sydney Lithuanian artists were active members of Šviesa: Henry Šalkauskas was elected vice-president in 1951, and Jurgis Bistrickas, Algirdas Šimkūnas, Vaclovas Ratas, Jurgis Reisgys and Jurgis Janavičius delivered lectures and gave demonstrations.²²¹

The Pen Club

In 1953 former journalist Paulius Sirgėdas (1911-1981) was instrumental in organizing a coterie, Plunksnos klubas (The Pen Club) for writers and journalists, and was its president until 1956. Although the club comprised only about fifteen members, its activities had an impact on the whole community: Lithuanian poetry and literary evenings were held and Renowned Writers' Commemorative Nights, open to the general Lithuanian community, were a special feature. In 1956, Sirgėdas moved to the USA and poet Vincas Kazokas (1919-1984) became president of the club. He broadened the membership and activities of the club and organized discussion evenings to include musicians, theatrical producers and visual artists. Jurgis Bistrickas, Vaclovas Ratas, Algirdas Šimkūnas and Leonas Urbonas, an outstanding speaker, were among artists active in lively debates which encompassed visual art, music, theatre and literature. From the seventies, the Club's activities became less regular, and in the eighties practically ceased.

Students Association

In 1952 Vytautas Doniela and Juozas Miknius founded the Sydney Lithuanian Students Association (Sydnėjaus lietuvių studentų sąjunga). By 1958, there were forty-seven members (of whom thirty-three were graduates of the University of Sydney) as follows:²²²

²²¹ *ibid*, Vol. 1, pp. 266-7

²²² *ibid*, p. 270

<u>Faculty</u>	<u>No. of Graduates</u>
Engineering	8
Science	8
Medicine	7
Dentistry	5
Economics	2
Arts	2
Physiotherapy	1

From 1963, graduates and students amalgamated to form an association called *Filisterių būrelis* (The Academic Group). It presented to the community many lectures -- some controversial -- on politics, nationalism, liberalism and tolerance. According to its 1964 president, Vytenis Šliogeris, membership in that year was about fifty, thirty-five of whom studied at the University of Sydney and the remainder at other universities and tertiary institutions in New South Wales. Eight were working towards higher degrees and three were students of art at East Sydney Technical College. Šliogeris also states that between 1950 and 1964 forty-three Lithuanians graduated in Sydney.

In the early eighties, the activities of the Academic Group declined and eventually ceased, and from that time, records concerning Lithuanian students and graduates have not been kept.

Lithuanian Weekend Schools

By the early fifties many young Lithuanian families were living in the western suburbs of Sydney, and the need was felt for an easily accessible, Lithuanian weekend school.

In 1949, Father Jonas Tamulis (who was transferred to the USA in 1950) had obtained premises at the Catholic Centre in Young Street, Sydney, but no pupils had been enrolled. In 1950 and again in 1951 attempts by Father Petras Butkus to establish a weekend school at St. Joseph's Church Hall in Camperdown were also unsuccessful, but in 1951, former school teachers Juozas Ramanauskas and Bronius Genys organized a weekend school in Horton Street, Bass Hill. This was attended at the outset by fifteen children. In 1952, it was transferred to the St. Felix Church Hall in Bankstown, and by 1954 attendance had reached fifty-one.

In 1955, another lay teacher, V. Bakaitis, began a weekend school at St. Joseph's Church Hall in Camperdown. The school was attended by some

twenty children and in 1963 was transferred to St. Joachim's Church Hall in Lidcombe.²²³ In the seventies the two schools amalgamated at Lidcombe and in 1982 the school had an enrolment of thirty students.²²⁴

In other western suburbs of Sydney, wherever Lithuanian families had settled in sufficiently large numbers, weekend schools were also established, usually in private homes or garages. One such began in Cabramatta in 1954, another in Ryde in 1955; both operated for less than a decade.²²⁵

During the fifties and sixties the curricula of the weekend schools included Lithuanian language and grammar, history and geography. Students successful in end-of-year examinations received certificates. Later, with diminishing numbers of students, the curriculum was gradually simplified: grammar was omitted and geography and history lessons were replaced by a focus on legends and fairytales. In the eighties, singing and national dancing were introduced and examinations abolished. The Bankstown weekend school was the most popular, mainly because of its convenient location and its theatrical performances. Ava Saudargas, playwright, producer and choreographer, combined with stage decorator Algis Plūkas in the production of children's plays of high quality. With Saudargas's retirement in 1975, the Bankstown School lost its greatest attraction.²²⁶

The enthusiasm shown towards weekend schools by parents and teachers in the early years gradually waned, due in part to the adults' advancing ages but also to the resistance of the children, many of whom resented having to forego sports activities, ballet or music lessons to attend weekend schools. In the seventies and eighties, the new generation of parents often regarded the Lithuanian language as of little or no consequence, some even claiming that it adversely affected children's use of English. Many considered weekend schools an unnecessary burden, and it was often left to grandparents with their stronger love of Lithuanian culture to encourage and escort their grandchildren to Lithuanian lessons.

In the late seventies, by which time the Australian Government's policy on immigration had changed from assimilation to integration, a new interest in ethnic languages arose. In 1978, the New South Wales Department of Education offered rent-free premises, paid the teachers and gave financial assistance to classes called Saturday Schools of Community Languages. Ethnic or second community languages were given nominally equal status with French and German in high school curricula. In Sydney, a Lithuanian language course was introduced at Ashfield Boys High School. Attended by twenty-four

²²³ *ibid.* p. 178

²²⁴ *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 397

²²⁵ *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 270

²²⁶ *ibid.* Vol. 2, pp. 396-7

students, it was conducted by Vida Kabaila and Aldona Veščiuaitė, both visual artists.²²⁷

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Sport

In 1950 the Kovas (Rook) Sports Club was formed in Sydney. The club arranges regular games and trains its members for interstate Lithuanian competitions and sports festivals which take place annually in Australian cities on a rotational basis. The most popular sports are basketball, volleyball, tennis and chess. Antanas Laukaitis is a prominent sports leader and organizer and the regular sports correspondent for *Mūsų Pastogė* and for the Lithuanian press in the USA. Membership of the Kovas Club varies but averages between fifty and seventy. Included are Australian sports persons as well as persons of other nationalities, some married to Lithuanians.

Scouting

The Lithuanian Scouts Organization (Lietuvių skautų sąjunga), established in Bathurst reception camp in 1948, was revived in Sydney in 1949. Divided into many groups and sub-groups, its total membership in 1953 was about 170. Since 1954, the Sydney Lithuanian Scouts Organization has been a member of the Exile Scouts Organization and has participated in its jamborees and contests.²²⁸

In 1958, seven and a half acres of land were acquired in the Ingleburn district, south-west of Sydney, for a Lithuanian scouts camping ground. The scouting movement continues to be a popular youth organization; forest camps and camp-fire evenings are held regularly. Young people particularly enjoy the songs and humorous entertainment at the camp-fire gatherings and children of mixed ethnic backgrounds often learn some Lithuanian at these scouts camps.

A scouts magazine *Pėdsekis* (Tracker) is published regularly, and Mothers' Day celebrations, Easter egg decorating, sash-weaving and wood-carving days are held. Scout leaders have included artists Algis Plūkas,

²²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 398

²²⁸ The Exile Scouts Organization was set up as a unifying body for refugee scouts groups in countries other than their native land. It therefore has a membership of scouts groups from many ethnic backgrounds.

Aleksandras Jakštas, Jolanta Janavičius; Henry Šalkauskas was Scouts patron for a number of years.²²⁹

Catholic Youth

In 1959, a Catholic children's organization, called Jaunieji ateitininkai (Young People of the Future) and with religious education as its major aim, was formed by Lithuanian Catholic church leaders. Because of the small membership (26 original members), they often joined with other organizations, such as scouts groups, for combined performances and activities.²³⁰

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Former professional people faced various situations upon arrival in Australia: architects and engineers with university degrees were usually employed in various government departments as draftsmen or engineers, and although their qualifications were not recognised, they were generally satisfied with such positions. Not one was required to re-study. In 1951, Balys Daukus established the Lithuanian Architects and Engineers Association in Sydney with about twenty members.

Medical and dental practitioners faced a more difficult situation as the Australian Medical and Dental Associations refused to recognise overseas qualifications. Some re-studied medical or dental courses; a few years later, others, most often with children, were sent to practise in Papua-New Guinea or in places such as outback Australia where it was hard to find applicants. After ten years' service in such places they were allowed to practise anywhere in Australia. It was not until 1963 that Dr. Irvis Venclovas was able to organize a Lithuanian Medical and Dental Association based in Sydney.²³¹ Although overall membership today comprises about thirty, seldom are all members present in Sydney. Members of both the Architects and Engineers and the Medical and Dental Associations have been active outside their professional fields, many assuming leadership roles in the broader Lithuanian community.

The greatest obstacles in obtaining employment within their professional fields were faced by teachers and lawyers. The nature of their professions required a thorough knowledge of the English language and, because of this, few were able to resume their previous careers. They were, however, very

²²⁹ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 264

²³⁰ *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 263-6

²³¹ *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 455

active within the Lithuanian community and many were stalwarts in conducting weekend schools and youth organizations, in staging dramatic performances, in setting up libraries and in contributing to Lithuanian newspapers and periodicals. A number of associations were formed, including a Teachers Association, a Lawyers Association and a Writers Association.²³² Some teachers and lawyers also belonged to the Plunksnos Klubas (Pen Club). In everyday life, however, they were not able to practise their professions and were often employed as cleaners, factory workers or domestics.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In 1956 the Sydney Lithuanian Women's Welfare Association was founded with Ona Osinas as its first president. Members of the association, most of them women with older children or adolescents, cared for sick and needy Lithuanians in Sydney and organized assistance for Lithuanians still in Europe. They also supported the Lithuanian High School in Hüttenfeld in Germany. This school continues to the present day as the only one of its kind in the world outside Lithuania.

Charity balls, lotteries and picnic gatherings were some of the means by which the Association raised funds. This money often assisted Sydney Lithuanian migrants who were reluctant at that time to accept government assistance because they considered it contrary to traditional ethics and a sign of their inadequacy.

In 1963 Ona Baužė, b. 1904, an 'old' migrant and a member of the Women's Welfare Association, proposed that a Lithuanian Village should be built as a retirement place for aged Lithuanians, most of whom were experiencing social and language difficulties. Government assistance was sought and in 1970 the Association was granted two acres of land at North Engadine in the Sutherland district. An intense fund-raising campaign began and building commenced soon afterwards. By 1975 the village comprised six duplex units and a communal area (seklyčia) which also housed a library of 1600 Lithuanian books, the bequest of Povilas Alekna.

The Sydney Lithuanian Women's Welfare Association has worked harmoniously since its inception and is today the only Sydney Lithuanian organization with substantial assets.²³³

²³² *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 269; Vol. 2, p. 420

²³³ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 259

LITHUANIAN COMMUNITY HOUSE

Organizations and associations required, of course, places in which to hold their meetings and rehearsals. During the early years, cheaper church halls were hired in suburbs such as Hurlstone Park, Dulwich Hill and Milson's Point. In Camperdown an Irish priest, Father O'Donoghue, allowed Lithuanians to use the church hall for community gatherings.

In 1950 the Sydney Lithuanian Community Council elected a steering committee to investigate the feasibility of purchasing a building to be used as a Community House. Members prepared 'promissory notes' seeking support from all Lithuanians and suggesting that such a community building should be near the city and as close as possible to a railway station. The committee encountered strong opposition to the proposed site from people living in the Bankstown-Lidcombe-Cabramatta areas. At that time there more than 300 Lithuanian families in the Bankstown area. It was understandable that this large group hoped that the Community House would be easily accessible to them and would include a weekend school for their children. In 1953 the Bankstown Lithuanian Community Council decided to proceed with plans for a Lithuanian House in that area. The sum of 750 pounds was raised, enabling the purchase of a block of land at 16-18 East Terrace, close to Bankstown Railway Station. Voluntary workers began the erection of a building and a register of hours worked was introduced by the House Committee.

While the establishment of the Bankstown Lithuanian House satisfied the needs of Lithuanians in that area, those living in and near the city centre continued to agitate for their own building. This eventually led to a decision by the Sydney Lithuanian Community Council to purchase its own building near the city. In 1957 a dilapidated building, formerly a hotel, at 18-20 Botany Rd, Alexandria, was bought for 5000 pounds. Work began on renovating the building: a new kitchen was installed and a dining room, small library and meeting rooms were created. Various organizations used the building but, over time, its patronage diminished as many people married and moved away from the city. The House was eventually sold and its activities transferred to Lidcombe, only 5 kilometres from Bankstown. In 1967 all three Lithuanian Community Councils -- Sydney, Bankstown and Cabramatta -- combined to form one Sydney Lithuanian Community Council. In 1970 the committees of both Houses agreed also to unite and Bankstown Lithuanian House became the centre for all community activities in Sydney. The building comprises three halls with facilities for stage performances, as well as a library, reading room,

kitchen, dining room and bar. Since 1984 the editor and staff of the weekly newspaper, *Mūsų Pastogė*, have also had their office there.²³⁴

Between 1948 and 1954 about fifty organizations were established in Sydney. Why did Lithuanian migrants of the first generation form so many groups? An important part of the explanation was offered by Vincas Kazokas, president of the Pen Club on the occasion of the club's fifth anniversary:

Destiny derided us and led other ways, not the ways we prepared ourselves to go. What a deep tragedy each one of us is carrying in our hearts, and how painful is the reality of life. The Pen Club gives us an opportunity to draw the curtain on everyday reality and live in another, illusionary world. Through it we regain our face and find a place for ourselves on the scale of values and purpose. The window into that illusionary world, which belongs to us alone, is this narrow circle humbly called the Pen Club. Here we are no more the mechanical, nameless little wheels of machines. We are persons.²³⁵

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN SYDNEY

Although Lithuanians in Sydney have established many strong community organizations, there has not, however, been a long-term, unifying body for Lithuanian artists. The Aitvaras (Goblin) art group set up in 1950 was short-lived, mainly perhaps because of its spiritualist founder's belief that it was not meant to continue. The more recent Lithuanian Art and Craft Association, set up in 1985, has as its major role the organization of regular art exhibitions.

VANGUARD ARTISTS

Most Lithuanian artists who settled in Sydney in the early post-war period had been art students whose studies had been interrupted by war and migration. All had endured hardship and suffering when Lithuania was invaded and they had been forced to seek refuge outside their homeland. They included Henry Šalkauskas, (1925-1979), Algirdas Šimkūnas, (1927-1971), Jolanta Janavičius, b. 1928; Eva Kubbos, b. 1928; Jurgis Mikševičius, b. 1923; Leonas Urbonas, b. 1922; and Jurgis Bistrickas, b. 1904. The only artists with established reputations were Vaclovas Ratas, (1910-1973), and the self-taught portraitist, Vladas Meškėnas, b. 1916. The last two enjoyed stable family relationships but most of the others remained single. Art activities were of very

²³⁴ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 260; Vol. 2, p. 372

²³⁵ Vincas Kazokas in *Mūsų Pastogė*, 11 Aug. 1958.

great importance to the majority of these early arrivals who felt a strong need for self-fulfilment and self-identification. They achieved notable results as individuals rather than as a group, but time, place and historical circumstance suggest that, for the sake of simplification in this thesis, they should be considered as the Sydney Vanguard group.

Many had studied in Germany at L'École des Arts et Métiers. These included Jolanta Janavičius, Šalkauskas, Šimkūnas, Bistrickas, Juozas Kalgovas and Aldona Veščiūnas. The last two participated in art activities for only a brief time after coming to Australia.

Slowly and cautiously, the new arrivals explored the Australian art scene, a primary source of contact being local art exhibitions. It is not surprising that, trained primarily in graphic media, they very soon became aware of the neglected state of graphic art in Australia. On the other hand, they found here an impressive tradition of painting. The works of Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, the Boyds and John Perceval asserted Australianness in both subject matter and style. Their paintings appeared exotic and fresh to the Lithuanian artists who were impressed by their expressive power, ruggedness, vitality and bold, pioneering spirit as well as by their stylistic primitivism.

These Australian artists, however, were based in Melbourne. In the Sydney art world, the cubist and semi-abstract works of Godfrey Miller, John Passmore and Ian Fairweather were somehow closer to the Lithuanian ethos because they reflected the French School whose teaching and ideas were familiar to Lithuanians. Many teachers at the Kaunas School of Art had studied at art schools in Paris where the best Lithuanian art students had undertaken post-graduate studies.

Because of language difficulties, most Vanguard artists found it difficult to establish personal contact with Australian artists. Sources of other information such as illustrated art publications and reproductions proved almost impossible to obtain. It was usually necessary to subscribe to overseas journals in order to keep abreast of modern art trends and developments, since such materials were rarely available in Australia.²³⁶ Art books were rare,²³⁷ and even then not particularly helpful because of Lithuanian's language difficulties.

In modern art, Lithuanian artists tended to admire most the qualities of spontaneity and freedom of expression. However, their particular *forte* of wood and linocuts lacked such qualities and such work was slow to execute. Moreover, the artists were affected by having lost contact to a great extent with

²³⁶ *Art in Australia* had ceased publication in 1942, and *Angry Penguins* in 1946. In the early fifties Henry Šalkauskas showed a copy of a glossy American art magazine, probably *Art News*, to the author.

²³⁷ Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, p. 291

their main source of inspiration -- the folk art and folklore of their native land. In the past these had provided artists not only with subject matter but, probably more importantly, with appropriate form and mood. Thus, their insecurity as refugees was made all the greater by their insecurity as artists.

In the early years, Lithuanian artists attempted to come to terms with life in a new land by having regular, informal communication with each other. In 1950 Jurgis Bistrickas founded the Aitvaras art group with a view to organizing a first Australia-wide Lithuanian art exhibition. Although this group was short-lived, Bistrickas contributed significantly in the fifties to Lithuanian artistic life in Australia.²³⁸

In the early fifties three artists arrived in Sydney from Canberra where they had been active in the Lithuanian community and the Canberra art world: Henry Šalkauskas moved to Sydney in 1951, Algirdas Šimkūnas in 1952 and Jurgis Mikševičius in 1953. With their arrival, Bistrickas, at that time the cultural affairs representative of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council, could more easily carry out his plans. In 1953 he organized the first Australia-wide Lithuanian Art Exhibition at Mark Foy's Gallery in Sydney. Seventeen artists participated showing seventy-four works.²³⁹ Of these, thirty-nine were graphic works and drawings, eighteen were oil paintings, thirteen sculptural pieces, three watercolours and one tapestry.

Sydney was represented by Jurgis Bistrickas, Juozas Kalgovas, Vladas Meškėnas, Jurgis Mikševičius, Henry Šalkauskas. Algirdas Šimkūnas and Aldona Veščiūnas; Melbourne by Gražina Firinauskas, Adolfas Vaičaitis and Teisutis Zikaras; Adelaide by Aleksandras Marčiulionis, Eleonora Marčiulionis, Antanas Rūkštelė and Leonas Žygas; Perth by Vaclovas Ratas; Geelong by Pranas Repšys; Canberra by Vincas Stanevičius. The Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council provided art prizes and arranged a panel of judges consisting of artists Desiderius Orban, Michael Kmit, Anita Aarons, Jurgis Bistrickas and author Vytautas Janavičius. First prize was awarded to Vladas Meškėnas for his pastel work, *Portrait of a Family*; second prize to Teisutis Zikaras for his sculpture, *Rūpintojėlis* (The Sorrowful God); and third prize to Henry Šalkauskas for a black and white linocut, *Three Women*. The exhibition was visited by over a thousand people.²⁴⁰

The Lithuanian community regarded the exhibition as a great achievement. It proved to many of its members that a creative spirit still survived despite the depression caused by loss of homeland and life in refugee camps. Before this Australia-wide exhibition, a number of art shows had been

²³⁸ See p.94

²³⁹ From catalogue *Exhibition of Lithuanian Artists in Australia*. Mark Foy's Art Gallery, Sydney, 7-19 Sept. 1953.

²⁴⁰ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 30 Sept. 1953.

held by individual artists in various parts of Australia: in Gympie in 1949 by Algirdas Kudirka; in Adelaide and Sydney, both in 1950, by Antanas Rūkštelė; in Perth in 1950 by Vaclovas Ratas; in Melbourne in 1952 by Teisutis Zikaras. As well, there had been several group folk-art exhibitions, for example in Bathurst and Bonegilla in 1948 and 1949 and in other migrant camps such as Railton in Tasmania.²⁴¹ These small, local events did not lift community spirits to the same extent as did the combined exhibition.

The First Lithuanian Art Exhibition was reviewed with polite reserve by all three Sydney daily newspapers. Paul Haefliger, art critic of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, commented that '... a certain predilection for expressionism may be discovered. Possibly it is no more than an inflection, a slight emotional emphasis, which distinguishes this show from its Australian equivalent.' Discussing Meškėnas's pastels, Haefliger noted that they revealed 'a certain poetic comprehension', and concluded that '... it is in the graphic arts that these aspirants to local fame display a professional touch. The wood engravings of Vaclovas Ratas, the linocuts of Algirdas Šimkūnas and the lithographs of Adolfas Vaičaitis demonstrate their capacity as illustrators ... Indeed, one feels that it is literature rather than art which is in the blood of these Lithuanians -- their very names suggest a poetry of no mean order.'²⁴²

Daniel Thomas, art critic of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote, 'If there are no masterpieces there is much good craftsmanship and a good deal of sensitive work. The show gives evidence of some of the good things the Lithuanians have brought us.'²⁴³ A second Australia-wide Lithuanian art exhibition was not held until 1958, and this was in Melbourne. In the meantime, individual artists exhibited locally.

In 1953, the Sydney art world experienced a particularly important event, the French Painting Today Exhibition, which brought to Australia many significant original works of modern art. It included 123 items, among them paintings by Picasso, Chagall, Matisse, Marchand and Rouault; it generated spirited discussion and exerted a powerful, lasting influence on the work of Australian artists.²⁴⁴ The exhibition was a strong catalyst for the adoption of new art forms. Lithuanian artists had been exposed, albeit briefly, during their student days in Germany, to similar exhibitions of modern art, but at the time the immaturity of many and the traditional training had prevented them, as a rule, from recognising the importance of new styles. Following the 1953 French Exhibition they, too, began to experiment with freer, abstract and semi-

²⁴¹ *Metrašiai*, Vol. 1, pp. 181-2, 248

²⁴² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 Sept. 1953, p. 2

²⁴³ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 7 Sept. 1953, p. 12

²⁴⁴ Alan McCulloch, *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, 1981, p. 193

abstract styles in linoprints. The results of this experimentation were in evidence at exhibitions that followed.

In 1956 Henry Šalkauskas and Algirdas Šimkūnas held a joint exhibition at the Bissietta Gallery in Sydney. Šalkauskas exhibited twenty works, comprising eleven representational, black-and-white linocuts, five semi-abstract compositions and four drawings. Algirdas Šimkūnas exhibited seventeen representational graphic works, varying from linocuts to drawings. Maximilian Feuerring, in the exhibition catalogue, wrote:

Šalkauskas ... comes from the woodcut which is essentially concerned with planes; he attains ... his vigorous effect by juxtaposing [them] in white and black. With a simplification of form, economy of means and strength of contours, he takes his departure from the "pithy" *Three Women* and *Still Life* and through the more animated *Quest*²⁴⁵ and *Regatta* arrives at abstract compositions in which the picture is made up of mere non-objective planes or lines in their reciprocal tensions.

On Šimkūnas, Feuerring commented that he 'builds up his style on the alternation between line and white cuts, moves freely within the frame of expressionism. He is rhythmic in *Two Clowns*, dynamic in *Quarrel*, texture-rich in *Still Life* and inventive in *Ex Libris*.²⁴⁶

The black-and-white graphic work of the pair was unusually black, especially that by Šalkauskas who worked more with planes than with lines. Each picture was small-scale, twenty-five centimetres or less in height. As one who was present, the author remembers that the atmosphere in the gallery was unusually gloomy. Probably the uniform arrangement of the small, dark works added to the oppressive mood.

It is interesting -- indeed curious -- to note that the exhibition organizers wrote in the Foreword of the catalogue: 'Sarcasm is always an expression in bad taste, although it may please someone ... In spite of that, this attitude does not help to achieve that atmosphere of freedom of artistic expression to which all have the right, no matter what their tendencies, degree or nationality.'²⁴⁷ Whether their reference was to graphic art and its 'low' status, to graphic artists and their standing or to the anticipated reaction of critics and the public remains a matter of speculation.

Following this exhibition Šalkauskas and Šimkūnas went their separate ways. Šalkauskas continued to work in linocuts but began to experiment with colourprints and watercolour. Šimkūnas also continued to work in linocuts but discovered oil painting and experimented with abstract shape and colour. From about this time he discontinued most associations with other people while

²⁴⁵ This was originally named *The Search*.

²⁴⁶ From catalogue, *Šalkauskas and Šimkūnas*, 1956.

²⁴⁷ *ibid*

Šalkauskas renewed his friendship with Mikševičius who had always been a painter and who encouraged Šalkauskas to use colour in his work.

In 1956, six Baltic artists formed a group which they called the Six Directions: there were two Estonians, Edgar Aavik and August Molder; two Latvians, Uldis Abolins and Dzēms Krīvs; and two Lithuanians, Jurgis Mikševičius and Henry Šalkauskas. An Italian, E.F. Bissietta, artist and private gallery director, was the patron of the group. At informal meetings, they often discussed the revolutionary new art form, Abstract Expressionism, but did not strive to use any particular style. The binding factor was friendship and understanding among artists of similar cultural and political backgrounds.

In 1957, Six Directions held its only exhibition, at the Bissietta Gallery in Sydney. Works shown were mainly abstract and semi-abstract in varied media. The group's name, which was also used as the title for the exhibition, was regarded by some critics as unsuitable. James Cook, art critic of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* wrote: 'In the cold light of reality, "Six Directions" is an ambitious, if not pretentious, title ... One might well ask, "Six Directions- to where ?"'²⁴⁸ Following the exhibition, which was intended to be neither ambitious nor pretentious, the group dissolved and each of the six artists took an individual road. It is possible that Cook's review was partly responsible for the break-up.

In 1954 Vaclovas Ratas arrived in Sydney from Perth. A trained graphic artist, he enjoyed great respect in the Lithuanian community for his artistic and organizational ability as well as for his reserved and polite personality. He was elected to the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council as a cultural affairs representative. As well as organizing Lithuanian art exhibitions, writing articles and editing several books on Lithuanian art, he was keen to promote graphic art on a much broader scale. From the vital art form which it had been in Australia in the early twenties, graphic art had, since about 1928, given way to the more colourful medium of painting and had become almost forgotten. It attracted attention from neither art critics nor the public. Ratas strove to make people aware of graphics as a serious and distinctive art form, deserving of recognition from critics, connoisseurs and the general public.²⁴⁹

In 1956, in an interview for *Mūsų Pastogė*, he said: 'There is no graphic artists association in Australia. But it is so necessary ... Probably, it will be possible to organize it.'²⁵⁰ Ratas was not able on his own to do this: his initial, single-handed effort to revive graphic art in Perth had failed and, besides, his English was rather poor and he had not yet formed many connections in Sydney. The most suitable person for the task was Henry Šalkauskas who had

²⁴⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, Aug. 1957.

²⁴⁹ See pp. 104-107

²⁵⁰ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 21 Mar. 1956.

many social contacts and was regarded as everybody's friend. At the time Šalkauskas was an executive member of the Contemporary Art Society and willing to co-operate with Ratas. Ratas proposed first to organize an Australia-wide graphic art exhibition and then, everything being favourable, to consider the establishment of a graphic artists association.

In 1960, under the auspices of the Contemporary Art Society, the first Australia-wide graphic art exhibition was held at David Jones Art Gallery in Sydney. The exhibition was divided into two: a Print section, which included ninety prints, and a Drawing section, with ninety-four black and white drawings. Prizes were canvassed among Lithuanians by Ratas: first prize of 100 guineas donated by Dr. Sofija Ambroza²⁵¹ for the best graphic print, was awarded to Earle Backen; second prize of fifty guineas, donated by the Lithuanian Cultural Council, went to Thomas Gleghorn for the best drawing.

After this successful exhibition Ratas persuaded Šalkauskas to invite more Australian graphic artists to form a lobby group and suggested Laurie Thomas, whom he had known in Perth, as the most suitable person to be president of such an association. The Sydney Printmakers Society was founded on 13 February, 1961, with Laurie Thomas as its first president. Foundation members included Sue Buckley, John Coburn, Joy Ewart, Strom Gould, Weaver Hawkins, Eva Kubbos, Ursula and Peter Lavery, Vaclovas Ratas, Elizabeth Rooney, Roy Fluke, Henry Šalkauskas, James Sharp, David Strachan and Earle Backen.²⁵²

Laurie Thomas reflected on the society's inception, which took place in his flat in Potts Point:

One Friday night -- I've forgotten whether it was planned or just happened -- there was a preponderance of printmakers: Henry Šalkauskas, Earle Backen, Sue Buckley, Elizabeth Rooney, Vaclovas Ratas, Jim Sharp, Eva Kubbos and lord (sic) knows how many others. They were all grizzling because whenever they showed their lithographs, their etchings, their screenprints, their wood engravings ... their smaller, more intimate works were always over-shadowed and overlooked among the larger canvases and splashes of colour in those mixed exhibitions. They argued that, big or small, a painting, especially in a mixed show, for some reason or other was always preferred by collectors to a print, however good. And so the group known as the Sydney Printmakers was formed, the idea being to hold its own shows, exclusively of prints, once or twice a year.²⁵³

A year later a similar Printmakers Society was founded in Adelaide. The Sydney Printmakers Society held its first graphic art exhibition in April, 1961,

²⁵¹ Dr. Sofija Ambroza, a graduate of Kaunas University, was the first Lithuanian medical practitioner to re-study medicine in Australia and graduated from Sydney University in 1955.

²⁵² McCulloch, *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, 1981, p. 380. Algirdas Šimkūnas was not among the foundation members, contrary to what is stated in this publication.

²⁵³ Laurie Thomas, *the most noble art of them all*. University of Queensland Press. 1976, pp. 94-5

at the Blaxland Art Gallery and this was later shown in Melbourne. From then on the Sydney group arranged regular showings of graphic art, as did other art societies. One of the most impressive, called the Australian Print Survey 1963-4, organized by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, toured state galleries for fourteen months. James Mollison writes: 'It is very largely the work of a group of New Australian printmakers that gives the Print Survey Exhibition the flavour that makes it so different from that which a corresponding exhibition of paintings might have had ... Henry Šalkauskas, Eva Kubbos and Vaclovas Ratas each have in common a vigorous, bold style.'²⁵⁴

Members of the Sydney group began to participate internationally. Their work was shown in graphic art exhibitions held in Japan, Brazil, Yugoslavia and Switzerland, countries with long graphic art traditions. Australia was represented by Vaclovas Ratas, Henry Šalkauskas and Eva Kubbos, among others.

Art critics and judges now began to accord higher status to graphic art. In 1963, in the prestigious NSW *Mirror-Waratah* Competition, Šalkauskas's *Serigraph* (silkscreen print), was awarded the grand prize. The *Daily Mirror* reported that this was the first time a grand prize in a major Australian art competition had been awarded to an entry other than an oil or watercolour painting.²⁵⁵ The new appreciation of graphic art soon found reflection in patronage: large business and shipping companies, hotel proprietors and private art connoisseurs began to buy graphic art works.

At the same time that Lithuanians were striving for greater recognition of graphic art, other, immense changes were occurring on the Australian art scene. The newly arrived Abstract Expressionism provoked a turmoil of reaction. Many theoretical discussions had followed the 1953 French *Painting Today* exhibition. In 1955, artist and art critic Elwyn Lynn, editor of *Broadsheet*, the official publication of the Contemporary Art Society of NSW, initiated debate on various aspects of abstract expressionism. According to both art historian Bernard Smith²⁵⁶ and art critic Paul Haefliger,²⁵⁷ abstract expressionism was launched on to the Sydney art scene by the 1956 *Direction I* exhibition which included works by Passmore, Olsen, Klippel, Eric Smith and William Rose.

In the sixties, almost all Lithuanian artists in Sydney began to experiment with abstract expressionism. It is worth asking whether there was some underlying reason. One possible explanation is that it was a style that offered psychological release to the newcomers. As refugees from both Soviet

²⁵⁴ James Mollison, 'Printmaking in Australia' in *Art and Australia*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1964, p. 236.

²⁵⁵ Gil Docking, *Henry Šalkauskas 1925-1979*, Catalogue of retrospective Exhibition at the NSW Art Gallery, 1981, p. 8 and the *Daily Mirror*, 9 Oct. 1963.

²⁵⁶ Smith, *Australian Painting*, p. 132.

²⁵⁷ Cited in Peter Pinson, *Abstract Expressionism in Sydney 1956-1964*: Catalogue of Retrospective Exhibition at the Ivan Daugherty Gallery, 1980, p. 5.

Communism and Nazism, nearly all had at one time or another been captured, conscripted, imprisoned or persecuted. Certainly, most had lost family members and friends. These traumatic experiences, it is reasonable to suggest, lay hidden in the subconscious minds of many. Abstract Expressionism was a subjective, emotional style which offered an opportunity to release experiences without a requirement to render them in explicit, definite shape. Fractured lines, broken shapes and free colour selection insubordinate to any particular object gave artists a freedom of visual expression not before known to them. This was also an evocative style, a style which spoke in innuendo, with reticence or with vehemence, but image-free. It provided opportunities for personal psychological discharge and unburdening of memories and events and helped to clear the way for a new and happier future. At the same time, abstract expressionism had become universally accepted and understood and was specific to neither culture nor country. It gave the artists, so to speak, an international passport and cultural security.

Following the establishment of the Sydney Printmakers Society, Lithuanian artists possibly felt a sense of 'mission accomplished' and no longer considered it necessary to meet as before to promote the revival of graphic art and printmaking. For whatever reason, from that time on, there seems to have been a definite move towards working independently, seldom seeking opinions and advice from, or even the company of, each other.

In 1965 Lithuanian artists in Sydney had an unexpected opportunity once more to celebrate achievement when four of them gained prizes at the prestigious Australian Fashion Fabric Design Awards. Leonas Urbonas won first prize and a gold medallion; Vaclovas Ratas and Eva Kubbos each won second prize and silver medallions; and Henry Šalkauskas won a bronze medallion.²³⁸

It is probably true, also, that by this time most had begun to feel more secure in their adopted country and had sufficient knowledge of Australian ways of life to enable them to work comfortably on their own. It must not be forgotten that, while Lithuanian graphic artists had been becoming more locally prominent during the late fifties and early sixties, there were two important Lithuanian painters -- Vladas Meškėnas and Leonas Urbonas -- who were working quite independently in Sydney. For the sake of continuity, however, it is proposed at this point to continue a discussion of those Vanguard artists who in the initial stages of their careers worked in close communication and co-operation with each other.

²³⁸ Their success coincided with the annual Press Ball for *Mūsų Pastogė*, and the whole community celebrated together.

The various art styles encountered by Lithuanian artists inevitably influenced their work. These influences are best seen by examining the development of the *oeuvre* of individual artists.

Jurgis Bistrickas,²⁵⁹ a former diplomat, became a painter only after World War II. He was a student in Austria of expressionist painters Pranas Domšaitis (1880-1965), Adomas Galdikas (1893-1969) and Viktoras Vizgirda, b. 1904, the first of whom inspired in Bistrickas a great interest in spiritualism. During the fifties Bistrickas contributed in a number of ways to Lithuanian artistic life in Australia: as organizer, curator, motivator and painter. His first paintings in Australia were landscapes, still-life works and a number of portraits rendered more in post-impressionist than in expressionist style. Following his exposure to the French Exhibition in Sydney in 1953, he became a staunch proponent of abstract art and began to use bright colours with bold strokes and impasto in his oil paintings. Unfortunately, there are none of his abstract paintings left in Australia, and in this thesis Bistrickas is represented by an atypical early portrait, *Henry Šalkauskas*, 1949 (ill. 28).

Born Kazys Žvironas on 27 January 1904, Bistrickas was the eighth child in a farming family in Užpaliai in Eastern Lithuania. At the completion of secondary education in 1924, he was advised by his art teacher, realist sculptor Juozas Zikaras, to study art. However, he chose instead to pursue studies in architecture at the University of Lithuania in Kaunas and three years later his interest in politics led him to embark on a diplomatic career. In 1928 he was appointed First Secretary at the Lithuanian Embassy in Moscow where he remained until 1939. In 1940, following the annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union, he returned to Lithuania and assumed the name of Jurgis Bistrickas in order to avoid the attention of the Soviets.

In 1944 he escaped to Austria where he met a prominent countryman, Pranas Domšaitis, an expressionist painter, personal friend of Edward Munch (1863-1944) and formerly active in the Berlin Secession Art Group. Bistrickas began lessons in Domšaitis's studio; these were a mixture of painting and philosophising. Domšaitis was a strong-willed and original person with very definite views on the afterlife, eternity and oneness of the Universe and he exerted a powerful influence on Bistrickas.²⁶⁰ In 1946 Bistrickas enrolled at L'École des Arts et Métiers in Freiburg-im-Breisgau to study painting under Adomas Galdikas and Viktoras Vizgirda, both expressionist painters.

²⁵⁹ Biographical and educational details (hereafter abbreviated in footnotes to Biog/ed details) recorded during interviews, 1988 in Honolulu.

²⁶⁰ Bistrickas learned to communicate, he says, with the spirits of the departed ones at will. In the eighties he claimed to have travelled several times to outer space and to have had contact with space creatures, 'just like us.'

In 1949 he migrated to Australia and settled in Sydney where he worked as a house-painter, water-diviner and clairvoyant. His philosophy, however, made no impression on the Lithuanian community. In 1950 he founded the first Lithuanian art group in Australia, Aitvaras, with the aim of organizing an Australia-wide Lithuanian Art Exhibition. Bistrickas began to organize the exhibition which was to be officially opened by M. Jean Gabriel Padovani, French Ambassador to Australia and formerly French Ambassador to Lithuania. Following M. Padovani's sudden death in 1952, Bistrickas terminated the existence of Aitvaras fearing that the Ambassador's death was a premonition. Bistrickas recently said, 'Aitvaras died before its own birth.'

The exhibition, however, did proceed, with Bistrickas its organizer in his capacity as Cultural Affairs representative of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council under whose auspices the exhibition took place in 1953 at Mark Foy's Art Gallery in Sydney. Bistrickas says that in 1962 he followed the 'call of the spirits' and migrated to South Africa where he later married Adelheid Domšaitis, a singer and music teacher and the widow of his early painting teacher. Bistrickas and his wife now live in Hawaii.

The importance of Henry Šalkauskas (1925-1979),²⁶¹ has extended far beyond the Lithuanian community. Graphic artist and watercolour painter, he made a lasting impression in the Australian art world by his efforts to revive neglected art forms and by being a strong proponent of abstract expressionism in the Sydney art scene of the sixties. Šalkauskas represented Australia at international graphic art exhibitions in Tokyo, London, Sao Paulo, Ljubljana and Lugano and was the recipient of over sixty art prizes and awards in Australia and overseas.

The only child of Henrikas and Ona Šalkauskas, he was born on 6 May 1925, in Kaunas. His father was a major in the Lithuanian army, his mother a medical student whose studies had been interrupted by war.²⁶² She had a great liking for poetry and the arts. The strongest artistic influence on Šalkauskas, however, was his uncle, Eugenijus Šalkauskas, whose watercolour painting fascinated the young boy.

In 1940 Šalkauskas was attending Aušra Boys High School in Kaunas when the first Soviet invasion occurred. His father was arrested and deported to Siberia and his three uncles were killed. One of them, Česlovas Šalkauskas, a

²⁶¹ Biog/ed details gained from interviews at various times with the artist, his mother Ona Šalkauskas, and many personal acquaintances, and also from a transcript of an audio-tape recorded by Hazel de Berg, in 1975, held in the Oral History Dept., National Library of Australia, Canberra.

²⁶² Ona Šalkauskas, *nee* Sizdikaukaitė, was one of the Freedom Fighters for Lithuanian Independence in 1917, and worked as a nurse in the battlefield.

farmer, was tortured to death by the retreating Communists in the June 1941 massacre in the forest of Rainiai.²⁶³ This aroused such terror that surviving members of the family made plans to escape as quickly and as far as possible from the Communists. In 1941, during the German occupation of Lithuania, Šalkauskas and his mother left Kaunas and settled temporarily in Danzig in Northern Germany where he studied graphic art at the Meisterschule der Deutschen Kunst.²⁶⁴ During the last year of the war the massive German mobilisation, Volksturm, took place and all male students, including Šalkauskas, were taken into military service. He later became a prisoner of war of the Americans until the end of hostilities.

From 1946 to 1948 he continued art studies at L'École des Arts et Métiers. His drawing teacher Vytautas Jonynas, his graphics teacher Telesforas Valius and his watercolour teacher Adomas Galdikas had been well known artists in Lithuania and winners of international awards. As there were a number of German university places allocated to foreign displaced persons, Šalkauskas was able to enrol at Freiburg University where he attended Art History and Philosophy classes. In 1949 Šalkauskas and his mother migrated to Australia where he was required to fulfil a two-year contract working at a quarry near Canberra.

As a student his views on art had been formed by his Lithuanian teachers and by the German Expressionist School. His training had stressed the importance of folk art and folklore as points of departure; the significance of endowing works of art with contemporary form had also been emphasised. While the Lithuanian teaching was influenced by the Paris experimental school, Šalkauskas's German art institution had given special attention to expressive, forceful form. The interplay of these varied influences merged in his work to produce a unique interpretation of life. However, veneration and exaltation of Nature and vestiges of half-forgotten myths almost always lay at the core of his work. Šalkauskas's *oeuvre* can be divided into two main periods:

1949 to 1963: graphic art period - which includes linocuts, silkscreens (serigraphs) and monotypes (single prints from various media);

1963 to 1979: watercolour period, consisting of semi-abstract and abstract paintings.

Graphic period: His early linocuts were bold in execution, figurative and expressionistic, e.g. *The Search*, 1950 (ill. 29), which owes much to Munch. Soon his calm disposition allowed him to shed the use of learned

²⁶³ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. Vol. 36, p. 497

²⁶⁴ *Merrifield*. Vol. 1, p. 195

expressionistic gestures and his linocuts, although still figurative, display larger and calmer planes, e.g. *Three Women* 1953 (ill. 30). Following his early exhibitions, he began to experiment in abstraction, at first alluding strongly to images and symbols. Probably the best example of this experimentation is *Harvest*, 1959 (ill. 31), in which he renders in semi-abstract manner the spirituality of ritual harvest festivities. Combining the symbols of the sun and wreath of rye and placing the combined symbol centrally within a large, solid square, the artist honours the holiness of the sun and the spirit of the rye.²⁶⁵ At the periphery, with quick rhythmic strokes, he represents the opulence of the harvest.

Mythological themes and Lithuanians' reverence of Nature and its forces again appear in his three-coloured linocut, *Behind is Always the Sun*, 1962 (ill. 32). Here the filigree-like projection of the horizontal axis and the joyously scattered sparks of fragmented rays reinforcing the pulsating, energy-loaded atmosphere are counter-balanced by the static and majestic yellow sun. In spite of this complexity, the formal linearism of the linocut prevails. For this work Šalkauskas won an award at the Third International Print Biennale in Tokyo in 1962.

Šalkauskas, it seems, felt that the freer, abstract style required media more pliable and easy to handle. From the early sixties, he began to experiment with serigraph (silkscreen) and watercolour and achieved a variety of results. In silkscreen his lines became bolder and more decisive, prompting art historian Catherine Burke to comment, 'He uses line as force and as mass.'²⁶⁶ Such forceful, massive lines are powerfully evident in *Serigraph*, 1963 (ill. 33) which won the Grand Prize in the *Minor-Waratah Festival Art Competition*.

During the transitional period between graphic art and watercolour painting Šalkauskas executed monoprints, e.g. *Messenger Arriving*, 1961 (ill. 34). Here, the soft edges of the mythological image hint of his coming freer mode of expression although the linear composition remains. Šalkauskas said in 1962: 'My work from about 1955 ... is going in two parallel directions. One direction ... is on Nature. The second ... non-objective, free created forms. Now ... those two parallels are somehow combined together.'

Watercolour Period: Šalkauskas found the medium of watercolour in Australia neglected and uninspiring, most watercolourists being concerned only with small, tinted drawings. In 1963, when he joined the Australian Watercolour Institute, he asked, 'Why can't you approach the medium in

²⁶⁵ A wreath of rye is the central object in Lithuanian harvest rituals. It is a symbol of the spirit of the rye and the thankfulness for the opulence of the harvest.

²⁶⁶ Catherine Burke, 'Australian Art in the Twentieth Century', B.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1971, p. 3

today's terms?'²⁶⁷ Šalkauskas's question echoed the sentiments of art critic Adrian Lawlor who earlier had described Australian watercolourists as 'lymphatic'.²⁶⁸

Šalkauskas's vision was of watercolour being used majestically, daringly and in grand fashion; he began to create huge, dark paintings. He gained a reputation as a 'monumental watercolourist',²⁶⁹ and considered Sydney's watercolourists to be 'far too cautious in their approach to the medium, too concerned with the production of neat washes of colour and failing, almost entirely, to explore the liquescent possibilities of this subtle and luminous medium.'²⁷⁰ In his huge paintings, many as large as one metre by two metres, he used mainly black with its shadings and translucency, often juxtaposing this with white. He was influenced by the American 'action painters' of the fifties and sixties such as Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, Adolph Gottlieb and Franz Kline. They, however, all used oil as their medium and their work does not show the transparent quality that watercolour alone can endow. Art critic Alan McCulloch writes, 'The work of Henry Šalkauskas means to Australia what the work of Soulages means to France, or that of Kline means to USA.'²⁷¹

In his watercolours Šalkauskas fused a grand, gestural technique with emotional subtlety. His subject matter continued to be the same. The painter explained, '... [the paintings] represent creativity ruminating over or being in ecstasy about water, earth, sky and cities; but it is the rumination and ecstasy that I want to put down.'²⁷² The ecstasy, sometimes expressed in basic black with complementary grey nuances, is introverted, solemn and contemplative, as in *Painting*, 1968 (ill. 35) and *Edge of Spring*, 1969 (ill. 36) and sometimes in colour as in *God of Spring*, 1964 (ill. 37) and *Monument*, 1967 (ill. 38). Art critic James Gleeson comments, 'Each painting is an act performed in a dignified though mysterious celebration ... the slowness and deliberation gives his work the quality of a ritual.'²⁷³

The emotional force of Šalkauskas's work comes sometimes from solid black columns or abstract configurations, as in the *Edge of Spring*, but more often from the grey, shadowy folds of overlapping veils as in *Painting*, 1970 (ill. 39), where strong black forms ensure permanence and durability. Elwyn Lynn says, 'Henry Šalkauskas' huge watercolours of vast, uneasy, and almost threatening areas of opaque and transparent blacks, greys and "used" or "aged"

²⁶⁷ Andrew Sayers, 'Watercolour in Contemporary Australian Art', in *Art and Australia*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1991, p. 360

²⁶⁸ *ibid*

²⁶⁹ This was the phrase often used in the local press to describe his work.

²⁷⁰ Docking in *Art and Australia*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1982, p. 320

²⁷¹ McCulloch in *Herald*, Melbourne, 10 Mar. 1971.

²⁷² Smith, *Australian Painting*, 1971, p. 360

²⁷³ James Gleeson, *Sun*, Sydney, 18 May 1971.

browns and blues were commanding, thunderous and aimed at the sublime as did much of N.Y.'s Abstract Expressionism a decade before.²⁷⁴

Towards the end of his life Šalkauskas returned to a more ideographic representation of Nature in almost pure monochrome of blue or green. This increased the emotional element yet retained the same solemnity and mystery: an example is *Untitled*, 1969 (ill. 40). In contrast to the previously prevailing impersonal sublimity, there is now a preponderance of personal lyricism. The large fields of colour evoke hope, trust and reconciliation, as in *Painting*, 1979. As well as being more intimate, his last colour monochromes are smaller in scale and somewhat closer to reality, containing more recognisable images of horizon, mountains and meadows.

In the fifties Šalkauskas helped to make graphic art a recognised and significant artform in Australia. His impact on Australian watercolour painting is largely due to his huge, monumental works. Art historian Gil Docking says of him: 'Henry Šalkauskas pioneered, in Australia, a new respect for watercolour painting as a medium capable of being used powerfully, expressively and beautifully.'²⁷⁵

Šalkauskas died suddenly from a heart attack in 1979. Regarded by many as a happy-go-lucky and gregarious person, he was in reality a lonely man who lived, alone and unmarried, in the same house at Kirribilli from the time of his arrival in Sydney, working at the same job -- as a house painter -- and never travelling. His loneliness and private contemplation are reflected in his art work.

In 1980 his mother Ona Šalkauskas donated \$30,000 to the Art Gallery of New South Wales to establish the Henry Šalkauskas Purchase Award for Contemporary Art.²⁷⁶

Graphic artist and painter **Algirdas Šimkūnas** (1927-1971),²⁷⁷ a close, early associate of Šalkauskas and a former fellow student at L'École des Arts et Métiers, did not achieve the same level of success, in either art or life.

Born into a large farming family in Gatakiemis village in the county of Utena, Šimkūnas attended Utena High School and later studied at the Academy of Art in Vilnius. His fellow students remember him as a reticent, diligent young man. He was well read, had a passion for poetry and usually preferred his own company to that of others. He was captured by the Germans and conscripted into their armed forces while attempting to flee Lithuania in 1944.

²⁷⁴ Elwyn Lynn, 'Without Pompousity', in *Quadrant*, Aug, 1981.

²⁷⁵ Docking, *Art and Australia*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1982, p. 321

²⁷⁶ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 19 May 1980.

²⁷⁷ Biographical details recorded at various times with Jolanta Janavičius, Jurgis Bistrickas, Juozas Kalgovas and others in interviews with the author.

At the end of the war, while in a displaced persons camp in Germany, he continued art studies, originally begun at the Vilnius Art Academy, in Freiburg-im-Breisgau at both L'École des Arts et Métiers and the University of Freiburg.

Like many others, Šimkūnas arrived in Australia as a graphic art student forced by war and migration to interrupt his studies. He, too, had been trained to base his work on folk art. Sketches which still exist from his student days attest to his adherence to this training. As well, he experimented with expressionism and cubism, adding individual decorative features. Linocuts from this time are representational and fluctuate between expressionism and decorativeness, between linearism and planarism, as in *Still Life*, 1947 (ill. 41). These tendencies, though more conspicuous and defined, continue in his later work. In 1956, following a joint graphic exhibition with Šalkauskas at the Bissietta Gallery in Sydney, there was strong motivation for Šimkūnas to switch to painting; complimentary remarks by his countrymen undoubtedly precipitated his resolve. He began to work in oils, at first on a small scale, and later with paintings one to two metres in length. His oil paintings were influenced by the wave of Abstract Expressionism sweeping the Australian art world at that time, while his graphic work tended to retain cubistic features. When his first solo exhibition was held at the Bissietta Gallery in 1959, art critic James Gleeson wrote that Šimkūnas had 'individuality' and 'no need to borrow so freely from others'. Gleeson concluded, 'Most important of all is a hint in [the work] of something beyond mere surface decoration.'²⁷⁸ Wallace Thornton, art critic of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, gave more attention to Šimkūnas's use of colour and tone, and found them 'singing' harmoniously within the sombre background.²⁷⁹

In the early sixties Šimkūnas continued to employ features of decorativeness, expressionism and cubism in his graphic work, e.g. *Flowers*, 1961 (ill. 42). In *Still Life with Bowl*, 1961 (ill. 43) the influence of Cezanne and Picasso is obvious, although he endeavours to make a stronger, more resolute statement of his own than in his previous work.

In the middle sixties Šimkūnas experimented with abstract style in both graphics and oils and revealed a spiritual dichotomy. Some linocuts show a predominantly agitated spirit: a capricious distribution of large dark planes, lines pointing in various directions and an unbalanced accumulation of these in some areas, e.g. *Composition 1*, 1965 (ill. 44). Other linocuts reveal the more harmonious aspect of his personality, e.g. *Composition 2*, 1968 (ill. 45) in which large dark planes are rhythmically placed in two rows and strongly linked together. The work evokes a sense of intensity and striving, a celebration of order as opposed to chaos.

²⁷⁸ *Sun*, Sydney, 4 Aug. 1959.

²⁷⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 Aug. 1959.

Some of Šimkūnas's oil paintings are figurative and expressionistic, others abstract and more introspective. One of his largest oil paintings, *Arrangement with Angle*, 1966 (ill. 46), as the title suggests, arranges broad mosaic colour-slabs in an isomorphic manner. With muted hues and dynamic but disciplined composition, Šimkūnas reveals in art a most lyrical atmosphere. This, of course, is in direct contrast to the anxiety of his own life, which is more aptly exemplified in *Mood in Grey*, 1966. Elwyn Lynn writes of his work: 'He is more concerned with decorating his forms than are his fellows; his psychological and formal interests are less intense and he throws into relief the serious urgency and declamatory nature of most of the work in this book.'²⁸⁰

Šimkūnas experimented concurrently with abstract expressionism and impressionism, using both oil and graphic media. He was a prolific artist: by 1961 he had completed over 300 works and participated in over thirty group exhibitions.²⁸¹ It would seem that his lino engravings display the austere aspects of his personality, while in his oil paintings he was able to unveil the poetic leanings and longings which in real life he expressed in no other way.

After his settlement in Sydney in 1952 he gained employment as a mail sorter at Sydney Central Post Office and remained there until his death. In the fifties and sixties he was an active member of the Lithuanian community. He belonged to the Šviesa (Light) Organization and took a role in assisting various cultural activities. In the early years he was a decorator for the children's theatre, but most notable are his articles to the Lithuanian press on art and art criticism. He belonged to the Plunksnos Klubas (Pen Club) where he lectured and contributed to discussions on art, culture and politics. He lived alone and remained single.

In the late sixties Šimkūnas developed a persecution complex and isolated himself in fear of enforced repatriation to the Soviet Union. His behaviour became eccentric and he retrieved works he had previously given to friends and fellow countrymen. After his sudden death from a heart attack in 1971, his art and personal belongings were auctioned before members of the Lithuanian community were aware of the sale. Most of his work disappeared without trace; the little that has been located is mainly graphic art.

Painter, sculptor and art teacher Jurgis Mikševičius,²⁸² the second of three sons, was born on 8 March 1923 in Šiauliai in Lithuania. The family later moved to Kaunas where Jurgis completed his secondary education at Aušra

²⁸⁰ Lynn, *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*. Lithuanian Community in Australia, Sydney, 1967, p. 8

²⁸¹ *Metraštinis*, Vol. 1, p. 277

²⁸² Biographical details recorded in interview with artist Dec. 1988.

Boys High School in 1940. His father Medgardas, a civil engineer, and his mother Elena, a medical practitioner, both appreciated art. They visited art exhibitions and possessed a collection of art works. They greatly admired the paintings of M.K. Čiurlionis and owned reproductions of his works.

While at high school, Mikševičius also attended private art classes conducted by Jonas Mackevičius (1872-1954), an impressionist painter and graduate of the Italian School. In 1941, following the second Soviet invasion of Lithuania, the family fled to Germany where they lived temporarily in the Darmstadt refugee camp. From 1946 to 1948 Mikševičius studied architecture at the University of Darmstadt and art at the Werkstaetten der Bildenden Kunst (Workshops for Creative Art) which had a curriculum similar to the Bauhaus School with emphasis on experimentation. Although Mikševičius did not complete his studies, his teacher Paul Thesing, a cubist painter, issued him with a certificate of attendance. This later proved valuable in enabling him to obtain a teaching position in Australia.

In 1948, Mikševičius migrated alone to Australia. He completed a two-year government contract as a labourer with the Works and Housing Department in Canberra. Quite by chance he made contact with the Canberra Artists Society and in 1949 became its first Lithuanian member. Later, when Henry Šalkauskas and Algirdas Šimkūnas arrived in Canberra, Mikševičius introduced them to the Society and all three participated regularly in its exhibitions.

In 1951 he sponsored his parents' migration to Australia and at weekends built them a house. In 1953 he moved to Sydney, where he married Elva Lucas, a homoeopath and a widow with two children. He hoped to find a job in the building trade but was unsuccessful and had to take work as a cleaner. In 1959 he was asked to relieve as art teacher at the Birrong Girls High School in Sydney; he was appointed as a temporary teacher and remained in the Education Department until his retirement in 1982. Meanwhile, to acquire qualifications necessary for teaching, he studied and graduated from the Teachers College at the University of Sydney, gaining a Diploma of Education in 1960. At Sydney Technical College he studied art history, graduating in 1961. Subsequently, he became a subject master of Art and worked in Birrong, Beverly Hills and Asquith Girls High Schools.

From the time of his arrival in Sydney, Mikševičius was a member of the Contemporary Art Society and a regular participant in art exhibitions of both the Society and the Lithuanian community. In 1956, he was a foundation member of the Six Directions Art Group which comprised six Baltic artists.

Mikševičius and Šalkauskas being the two Lithuanian members.²⁸³ In 1957, their only exhibition was held and art critic Max Feuerring considered Mikševičius's cubist oil painting *Still Life*, 1957, to be the best exhibit. In the same year, Mikševičius was highly commended for his entry, an oil painting, *Head of Christ*, in the Blake Prize Exhibition. His work has undergone considerable change and can be divided stylistically into three groups, although there is no sharp time division: Cubist, Indian and Combined-style paintings.

Cubist paintings: Mikševičius began as a cubist painter, influenced by the work of Cezanne and Picasso, as demonstrated in his *Still Life with Mask*, 1960 (ill. 47). In his paintings of this period, he generally includes symbolic objects: candle, book, death mask and other signs of mortality. The compositional element is strong and execution is bold and simple.

Indian Paintings: While studying towards art teaching qualifications, Mikševičius's research into art history gave him a strong feeling for Indian art which he describes as 'very close, intimate and as if known from before.' He travelled to India in 1978, 1982 and 1987, each time staying for six months. He says, 'In India there is no secular art. Everything is spiritual and harmonious and the feeling is like living in Čiurlionis's paintings. And the language has the same sound and rhythm as my mother tongue. I felt at home.' His statements echo the impression of so many Lithuanians, young and old, who come into contact with Indian culture.²⁸⁴ By reading and reflecting, Mikševičius gradually became immersed in the spiritual world and began painting, he says, 'the impossible, the real substance.' Mikševičius believes that 'there is no line between art and religion. Art is a method of transcending thought.'

This philosophy is expressed in his painting, *The Unconditioned*, 1969 (ill. 48). Using the shape of a golden circle he alludes to the Unknown, the Oneness, as in Indian Andhra art and in Čiurlionis's visionary paintings. In sculpture, he expresses the same ideas in simplified, three-dimensional form, as in *Black Sun*, 1970 (ill. 49). The mysteries of Indian philosophy are rendered sometimes in a more complicated manner, using a multi-coloured palette and varied shapes, as in *Nibbana and Samsera*, 1971 (ill. 50). In general, however, Mikševičius is inclined to paint pictures containing only a few objects, as in *Black Moon*, 1981 (ill. 51). With basic forms -- circle, line and carefully chosen colour -- he endeavours to unfold his awe and reverence of the Unknown.

²⁸³ There is uncertainty concerning the year in which Six Directions was founded: Alan McCulloch in *Encyclopedia of Australian Art* gives the year as 1953; Mikševičius and Mūsų Pastogė (5 Aug. 1957) both state that it was Nov. 1956.

²⁸⁴ Bistrickas, Šerelis, Sadauskas, among others.

Combined-style Paintings: Influenced by Eastern philosophy, he began to see the Western landscape differently and searched for a unity and oneness in it. This approach is reflected in *Lake Congola*, 1962 (ill. 52) and *Landscape*, 1975 (ill. 53). In the first painting the elements are rendered in broad, straight bands of colour; they are divided into countless, rhythmic facets, all contained within a single unit. His brushstrokes are bold and confident, his compositions uncluttered and his colour scheme selective but bright and clear. The artist strives for clarity and simplicity in expressing his submission and awed humility in the face of the power and immensity of the Universe. Through Indian philosophy, Miksevičius has found solace and consolation. He says he has learned to regard the material world as transient and insignificant. He lives in Sydney and paints now only for his own satisfaction. He has not exhibited publicly since 1978.

Vaclovas Ratas (1910-1973),²⁸⁵ graphic artist, illustrator, editor and art exhibition organizer, on arrival in Australia in 1949 was an artist with an established reputation. In Australia he was responsible, among many other things, for the formation of the Sydney Printmakers Society.

He was born on 25 January 1910, in Paliepis village in the county of Seinai. His father owned a mill and he and his wife raised a family of four children. Vaclovas showed a talent for drawing from a very early age, even before he could talk. On completion of his high school education Ratas enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art. There Professor Adomas Galdikas encouraged his students to value folk art and to use it as the basis for their work. In 1933, Ratas was a foundation member of the art students' coterie, *Forma*, which had the aim of 'cultivating art with a Lithuanian spirit'.²⁸⁶ Their first project was the combined illustration in 1934 of the fairytale, *Seku seku pasaka* (I am Telling a Fairy Tale), by Jurgis Talmantas.²⁸⁷

After graduating from art school in 1935, Ratas undertook post-graduate study in Venice, Florence and Rome. While working as an art teacher in 1936, he illustrated the famous poem by Maironis, *Jūratė ir Kastytis* for which he gained the Prix d'Honneur at the 1937 International Graphic Art Exhibition in Paris.²⁸⁸ He also worked as a stage decorator at the Kaunas Opera and Ballet Theatre where he met and in 1938 married ballerina Regina Drazdauskaite. By this time he had become the curator of the Čiurlionis Gallery in Kaunas. With

²⁸⁵ Information given to author by Ratas's sister Evelina Rataitė-Račiūnienė, Vilnius 1975, and by his wife Regina and daughter Ramona, both in Sydney.

²⁸⁶ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 6, p. 339

²⁸⁷ This recounts the folk story of the tragic love between the sea goddess Jūratė and Kastytis, the fisherman.

²⁸⁸ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 24, p. 531

the 1940 Soviet invasion of Lithuania came condemnation of the paintings of Čiurlionis; the gallery was accused of fostering a cult that worshipped 'decadent art' and of 'damaging the workers' healthy sense of aesthetics'.²⁸⁹ To avoid deportation, Ratas and his wife often hid at night in the corridors of the gallery. The situation changed only when the Russo-German War broke out in 1941. Three years later, the Soviets returned and Ratas, his wife and their newly born daughter Ramona joined the surge of refugees to the West.

At the end of the war the Ratas family found themselves in Augsburg in West Germany. Over the next few years, Ratas established the Studija Art School and was art editor of the newspaper, *Žiburiai* (Lights) for four years; in 1946 he published *Forty Woodcuts*, the first Lithuanian art book published in exile; he illustrated with woodcuts the fairy-tale, *The Twelve Ravens*, which was published in 1949 by the Lithuanian Institute of Arts, established in Freiburg-im-Breisgau by a group of artists and intellectuals. Ratas was a foundation member of the Institute.

Other art forms continued to be cultivated in the family: Ratas's wife, Regina, took part in the first Lithuanian ballet performance in exile. This was *Coppelia* by Delibes and was staged in 1947 in Augsburg. She also established there her own school of classical ballet.

In 1949, the Ratas family migrated to Australia where, after their arrival in Fremantle, Ratas worked in a metal factory at North Beach. This proved physically intolerable for him and an American artist, George Voudouris, befriended him and arranged the necessary formalities for Ratas's work contract to be altered. Ratas and his family were then able to move to Perth where he obtained work at the Darbyshire Pottery at Scarsborough.

His friendship with Voudouris proved invaluable. They held a joint exhibition of paintings and woodcuts at the Newspaper House Art Gallery in Perth in 1950. This gained them the attention of Laurie Thomas, at that time Director of the Western Australia Art Gallery. In 1953, following a second Ratas-Voudouris exhibition where Ratas showed twenty-two new woodcuts on Australian themes, he was invited to give a demonstration of graphic art at the Western Australian Art Gallery. In a short speech, Ratas said:

... [In] the Australian world of art, graphic art does not exist, it is not referred to and the institutions do not donate prizes for this type of creation ... Recently two artists in a Sydney exhibition exhibited ... lino cuttings. The leading Sydney papers even in their main headings referred to these works as wood-cuttings. Is there not a difference between wood and lino cuttings?²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ A. Kamenskis, 'Įveikti formalizmo įtaką' (To Overcome the Influence of Formalism) in *Literatūra ir menas*, Vilnius, 17 Sept. 1950.

²⁹⁰ Excerpt from his written speech where he refers to linocuts by Šalkauskas and Šimkūnas in the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition at Mark Foy's Gallery in Sydney.

Ratas felt a mission to revive and popularise graphic art in Perth. However, he was unsuccessful. His wife's efforts to attract interest in classical ballet also failed. After Ratas and his family moved to Sydney in 1954, his compatriots found work for him and his wife in a ceramics workshop. In 1956 Ratas held his first exhibition in Sydney, at the Bissietta Gallery. All the woodcuts shown were works from an earlier period.

His first six years in Sydney were the most artistically unproductive in Ratas's life. The time and energy of the couple were taken up by their need to establish a new home and, as well, Ratas was very actively involved in community affairs. He was elected to the Cultural Council of the Sydney Lithuanian Community and his arrival in Sydney was timely for the general Lithuanian community as Jurgis Bistrickas, who had been artistic organizer, had become deeply involved in the spiritual world and had lost interest in current happenings.

From about 1960, Ratas's work was prolific and inventive, rich in variety of form, mode of expression and subject matter. From figurative representation he changed to semi-abstract, abstract and then back to figurative. From woodcut he went to lino, plaster and colour prints, metal graphics and metal collage. Ratas was the initiator of the establishment on 13 February 1961 of the Sydney Printmakers Society. He also became involved in the literary world as an art editor of *Australijos lietuvių metraštis* (Australian Lithuanian Chronicle), 1961, and *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, 1967, both published by the Lithuanian Community in Sydney. As well, he illustrated a book of short stories by Agnė Lukšytė, *Kalnąvelnias* (Devil of the Mountains), published in 1970.

In 1965 he was awarded a Silver Medal at the Australian Fashion Fabric Design Awards in Sydney. He participated each year in exhibitions of the Printmakers Society, the Contemporary Art Society and in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Ratas's friends in the USA organized exhibitions of his work in Chicago in 1962, in Toronto in 1963, in Cleveland in 1966 and in New York in 1967. His daughter Ramona, while on a ballet tour, arranged exhibitions in Chicago in 1967 and 1968 and in Philadelphia in 1968. From about 1967 Ratas was under constant medical supervision for leukaemia from which he died on 3 January 1973 at the age of sixty-two.

Vaclovas Ratas's *oeuvre* can be divided into three main periods:

- 1932-1949: Lithuanian period;
- 1949-1954: Perth period;
- 1960-1973: Sydney period.

Despite differences in style and media, the unifying elements of simplicity, stylisation, decorativeness, hierarchy of composition and precise attention to technique are always evident. In his repertoire the motifs of sun, bird and boat appear in every period, though in different contexts. In all his graphic work Ratas remains static and detached and uses elaborate background treatment to enhance the central motif and to create a fairy-like atmosphere. His graceful, refined and joyous work was intended primarily to please and delight.

The Lithuanian period: Works from this period stem from the folk-art tradition and are simple, stylised and linear, e.g. *Mother*, 1936 (ill. 54). This is one of five fairytale illustrations from *Jūratė ir Kastytis*. Although the incisive line is straight and rather heavy and the subject matter is the anxiety of the mother, the overall decorative background pattern endows the woodcut with a fairytale spirit. Soon, Ratas's work became more sophisticated, e.g. *Tinklai* (Nets), 1939 (ill. 55). His strong line, still the prevailing element in his carving, is used to form dominant concave shapes and make jubilant, rhythmical statements.

In exile Ratas became more gloomy and dramatic. His illustrations for *The Twelve Ravens* are more planar than linear, with a preponderance of large black areas, e.g. *Ravens*, 1947 (ill. 56). The dramatic element is expressed mainly in the general angular rendering, in the compositional stretch of the birds' wings and in their threatening glances. For the first and only time, Ratas comments on the tragic reality of his situation in exile with his woodcut, *At the Crossroad*, 1946 (ill. 57). Here he links the divine power of Rūpintojėlis (Sorrowful God) with the reality of the situation of fleeing refugees.

His Perth period was searching and tentative. Ratas's firm ideas about art were challenged. At first he lacked a creative ground as there was no folk art on which to base his work. He looked, however, to Aboriginal myths as a new source of inspiration and for interpretation of his own recent experiences and new surroundings. His early woodprints were executed in strong, straight lines and with tight composition, e.g. *Mimi*, 1952 (ill. 58). Here he curiously blends Aboriginal figures, represented in semi-abstract manner, and the sun, rendered in the traditional Lithuanian way. His woodcuts representing the local surroundings are more placid, e.g. *Scarborough Bus*, *Esplanade* and *North Beach*. By 1953 Ratas's line became fluent and graceful, often serpentine, and was accompanied by subtle tonal gradation in the flowing compositions, e.g. *Black Boy* (ill. 59) and *The Swans* (ill. 60).

The Sydney period was his most varied and complex. Ratas confronted abstract art and new media and ventured into the world of colour. He began to experiment with media that required less physical strength such as lino and plaster cuts, metal graphics and metal collages. These new materials afforded much freer rendering of sinuous and undulating lines and much greater variety of background tonality. *Sonata*, 1962 (ill. 61) is one of his first coloured and abstract works. This visual interpretation of music mostly uses freely created abstract forms harmoniously meandering in slow paths. Until 1966 he experimented with abstraction also in plaster cuts, e.g. *Sunny Day*, 1962 (ill. 62) and in metal graphics, e.g. *Frozen Sun* (ill. 63), *Luxuriant Space* (ill. 64), both 1965 and *North Pole*, 1966 (ill. 65). It is interesting to note that, even in these abstract works, the image of the sun remains and assumes a principal position in the composition.

From about 1967, Ratas returned to using images of objects in his work, e.g. *Lagoon Bird*, 1967. This is his last wood print. He achieved interesting results in his metal collages, e.g. *Korunocadju*, 1968, where his inspiration once again stemmed from Aboriginal myths.

Searching for physically easier means and possibilities, Ratas found one which enabled him to express the lyrical aspect of his personality -- the glassprint, or monoprint. This medium also allowed him to explore colour to the full, e.g. *The Unattainable*, 1970 (ill. 66). In glassprints, Ratas used the subtle Japanese methods which already border on watercolour principles. The backgrounds of his monoprints are ephemeral in character, the subtle blend of indefinable hues endowing the whole work with lyricism and musicality. His elegant line, light and fluent like a painter's brush, outlines with verve his objects, mostly birds or boats in the company of the sun, e.g. *The Blue Lagoon*, 1970, *Joyful Journey*, 1970, *Two Birds*, 1972 (ill. 67) and *Bird*, 1972 (ill. 68). Ratas's monoprints are statements of grace and elegance in sonorous and restrained manner.

It seems that Ratas's *oeuvre* and his innovative ideas, his organization of art exhibitions, his role in the publication of art books and, especially, his efforts to establish the Sydney Printmakers Society have never received adequate recognition, probably because of his unassuming nature and his reluctance to promote his own work.

Eva Kubbos,²⁹¹ painter and graphic artist, winner of some fifty art awards, arrived in Australia in 1952. Her major contribution to art in this country has

²⁹¹ The name is an Anglicised version of Ieva Kubosaitytė. Biog/ed details obtained from interviews with personal acquaintances, from audio tape recorded by Hazel de Berg, 1965, held

been in printmaking and watercolour painting, areas previously largely neglected. Her work has added a deep sense of awe and spirituality to the tradition of Australian landscape painting. As well as representing Australia in international art exhibitions, she has been involved in art activities as a foundation member of the Sydney Printmakers Society, as a member since 1961 of the Contemporary Art Society, and since 1963, of the Australian Watercolour Institute. She was the only migrant woman involved in the *avant-garde* abstract expressionist movement in Sydney. Up till 1985 she had held eight solo exhibitions of her work.

Kubbos was born into a farming family of six children in Didžiūninkai village in the county of Šilutė in 1928. Her father died when she was eight. Following his death, the family experienced much hardship, but Kubbos's childhood memories are filled with the wonders of Nature. She began to draw at an early age. In 1944, at the end of the eighth year of her education, she fled with her family to escape the advancing Russian army. They settled temporarily in Mittweiden in Northern Germany where she found work with a tailor who, recognising her artistic ability, encouraged her to produce fashion sketches. From 1945 to 1950 she studied at the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst (College of Applied Art) in Berlin.

In 1952 she arrived in Australia with her younger sister, Marta. They carried out two-year work contracts at a Shepparton fruit cannery and later, at a Brisbane biscuit factory. On completion of her contract, Kubbos worked in Melbourne as a window-dresser at Cann's Department Store. In 1955 she gained an award as top window-dresser in Melbourne and was promoted to the position of Advertising Manager.

This encouraged her to continue art studies and in 1956 she enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and later at Swinburne Technical College to study new techniques in graphic art. In 1958 she exhibited her work -- wood and linocuts -- for the first time in Australia at the Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition held at the Victorian Artists Society Hall in Melbourne. In 1960 she moved to Sydney, where she met Henry Šalkauskas who was to become her friend and mentor for many years. Kubbos said in 1980: 'He was to become my closest friend and inspiration.'²⁹²

In Sydney she began to work as a commercial artist with the John Sands Company and remained there for some fifteen years. When she first met Šalkauskas, he was already an executive member of the Contemporary Art Society and he introduced her to the Australian art world as well as to the Sydney Lithuanian community and its artists. Kubbos says, 'Sydney supplied

at the Oral History Department of the National Library of Australia, Canberra and *Metraštinis*, Vol. 1, p. 166

²⁹² 'Outback year inspired Eva's first art success', in *Mosman Daily*, 15 May 1980.

me with a certain stimulus an artist needs. Sydney gave me something that I lost after I left Berlin. I suppose this was perhaps the [communication] part with ... artists ... which I found here, also the very surroundings'.²⁹³

Kubbos was trained as a graphic artist basically in the German Expressionist style, and in the early post-World War II period was exposed briefly to new art movements through art exhibitions that travelled through Europe. Here she saw the work of such artists as Picasso, Chagall, Braque and Kandinsky, but these experiences did not have an immediate effect upon her work. She has said: 'I definitely didn't know what to see in these paintings, and I suppose in my mind all these elements of new art movements must have been rather confusing at that time ... I was not aware of so much at that time.'

Kubbos's work has undergone great changes in style and media and can be grouped into two periods:

1956-1963: Graphic period;

From 1963: Painting period.

Graphic period : She remained for some time within the bounds of figurative expressionism, but some of her first woodcuts in Australia, although figurative, are executed in softer style, approaching French post-impressionism more than German expressionism, e.g. *Two Figures*, 1957 (ill. 69).²⁹⁴ Her association with *avant-garde* Sydney artists who were experimenting in abstract expressionism led her to begin to change style and subject matter, working with semi-abstract linoprints and silkscreens based on dormant mythological ideas, as in *Myth*, 1961 (ill. 70). In this linoprint, strong lines accentuate the spiritual, indefinable aspects of the myth and reflect the influence of abstract art.

From this experimental period comes an abstract linocut, *Untitled*, 1962 (ill. 71) in which predominantly linear elements, reinforced with solid colour planes, begin to form circular shapes from the apparently amorphous pictorial space. Distribution of geometric shapes and their linkage by broad, decisive lines display a strong, underlying compositional element which in her later paintings is more difficult to discern.

Painting period: Responding to new ideas, Kubbos searched for new ways of expression, new media and new subject matter. Abstract expressionism emphasised spontaneity and gestural characteristics, and wood and linocuts were not the most suitable media in which to display such features. Kubbos experimented with oil painting but has remained with watercolour, gouache and acrylic, finding that they offer greater possibilities to express spontaneity and

²⁹³ *ibid*

²⁹⁴ This is reminiscent of Gauguin's Tahitian paintings.

immediacy. Most often she uses all three in the same painting: for sombre ideas she uses the more solid and opaque acrylic or gouache; for lighter, ethereal effects, transparent watercolour and its colour veils and layers. Her watercolour paintings are larger than those of most conventional watercolourists, but smaller than Šalkauskas's paintings. Even in her largest work she is totally in control in organizing the picture surface and imbuing it with dramatic tension through the use of bold composition and sensitive tonality. It is not, however, only the formal arrangement which makes her work appealing. Her subject matter - generally myth and landscape are her principal sources of inspiration - also has strong appeal. Kubbos has a pantheistic, mystical concept of the powers of the earth, sun and water, stemming from an upbringing in which these elements were held in great reverence. She expresses in her work an intense feeling towards Nature.

Probably the most important symbol in her work, as also in Šalkauskas's paintings, is the circle representing the sun. She has said, 'The sun really has great significance for me. It goes back partly to my childhood in Lithuania. There were always celebrations -- almost pagan, going back for hundreds of years -- at midsummer, after the long, cold winters.'²⁹⁵

In her work the interaction of the natural elements on which Man's existence depends assumes a sombre, portentous character as in *Morning Coming*, circa 1963 (ill. 72). In other paintings, the confluence of reminiscences of the past and experiences of the present is in evidence, e.g. in *Melting Trunks under the Yellow Sun*, 1963,²⁹⁶ for which she was awarded the Wynne Prize. *Dark Summer*, 1964 (ill. 73) has similar qualities. Of this work, James Gleeson comments: 'Dark Summer is an abstraction derived from a very different kind of summer to the ones we normally experience in Australia. Her dark and shuttered forms admit only a little light. It is thin and frail, and it falters through the painting like an invalid clinging to the darkness for support'.²⁹⁷

At times Kubbos's outlook on the forces of Nature mellows and she portrays them with greater benevolence. The dramatic aspects diminish and her paintings become statements of amicable worlds. Her forms become more defined and the paintings are rendered in a lighter colour scale with more tonal nuances, as in *After the Rain*, 1967 (ill. 74).

Of her solo exhibition in Adelaide in 1968, the art critic of the *Weekly Times* commented: 'Kubbos ... is concerned with the mystery of life under the earth, which responds to the call of the seasons and the sun, and is forever

²⁹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 Jan. 1971.

²⁹⁶ Originally titled *Mating Trunks under the Yellow Sun* (from tape transcript, p. 10.)

²⁹⁷ Gleeson, James., *Australian Painters*, Lansdowne Press, 1982, p. 373

being born, living and dying ... There is poetry in her painting, a love and a worship of this eternal power'.²⁹⁸

In 1979 Henry Šalkauskas died. Kubbos, as noted, has described him as her inspiration, but it seems that since his death she has far more completely found herself as an artist. Her work has become more intimate and more locally bound. She presents a more tangible landscape, expressed with strength, sensitivity and jewel-like colours, e.g. *Study Coastline*, 1980 (ill. 75). Her pictures are structured by building colour layer by layer, as in *Landscape*, circa 1982 (ill. 76). This technique endows her work with a quality of living and pulsating movement as if with pent-up emotional energy waiting to explode.

In the eighties she experimented with juxtaposition of strong, opaque structural elements and subtle translucent colour veils with tonal nuances, e.g. *Rhythm of the Surf*, 1980 (ill. 77). Following her 1981 exhibition in Hobart, artist Paul Boam wrote: '...Another painting which is very expressive is *Rhythm of the Surf*. A strong dark vertical area dominates the right-hand side of the painting while on the left a series of blue crescent shapes echo the movement of tides and waves. This work contains both the strength and cohesiveness which I felt was occasionally lacking in others.'²⁹⁹

One of her strongest paintings of the eighties is *The Red Cliffs*, 1980 (ill. 78). It is partly an illusory mythical landscape drawing upon subconscious memories and reality. Within the powerful composition her opaque gouaches represent the permanency of lifeforces and are contrasted with the poetry of the moving veils of watercolour, evoking longing for unknown vistas. In other paintings she alludes to the omnipotency of the sun which overpowers the landscape, awakening and stirring Nature, as in *Call of Spring*, 1980, (ill. 79) where bright yet sensitive bands of brilliant colour dominate the strongly constructed painting and eliminate the dark world. Kubbos's paintings are probably best described by Elwyn Lynn: 'Eva Kubbos employs a dark luminosity, and her colours tend to look like shadowed sunlight, like gold veiled, even shrouded in black. Floating areas suddenly congeal into solid forms that retain an air of impermanence in the midst of stormy masses. The metaphysical mood, the imminent rain of menace, forms emerging into secret light or wreathed in mists are her concern, but there is no room for woolly romanticism or shadowy subterfuge.'³⁰⁰

Kubbos achieved recognition early in her career, receiving for her paintings the prestigious Wynne Prize in 1963, 1970, 1971 and 1979. The Pring Prize, for the 'best landscape executed in watercolour by a woman' was awarded to her eight times between 1970 and 1984.

²⁹⁸ *Weekly Times*, 25 Sept. 1968.

²⁹⁹ Paul Boam, 'Influence Modified', in *Mercury*, Hobart, 10 Jul. 1981.

³⁰⁰ Lynn, *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, p. 8.

Art critics, including Gleeson and Pinson, often discuss Kubbos's work in conjunction with that of Šalkauskas. Gleeson observes: 'Both Eva Kubbos and Henry Šalkauskas use an abstract pictorial language to express their feelings, and the nostalgia that is the shaping force behind all their work gives it a recognisable family likeness.'³⁰¹ There is no doubt that there is similarity, mainly because they had the same cultural background, they worked together for almost twenty years and they were both inspired by the forces of Nature and the mythological past. Both admired and were influenced by the great contemporary exponents of abstract expressionism such as Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, William Bazotes and Helen Frankenthaler. However, although the works of both Kubbos and Šalkauskas display the freedom of abstract expressionism, Kubbos's emotional, richly colourful, tangible and more personal works of quicker rhythm differ from Šalkauskas's majestic, black and grey tonal masses which are static or move only in the slowest of rhythms. Eva Kubbos's resolute yet sensitive work plays in the Australian landscape painters' orchestra a new, solemn instrument.

Vladas Meškėnas,³⁰² painter, draftsman and portraitist and one of the most important artists of the Vanguard Group, works alone and has never wished to associate with groups, societies or other artists. In his portraits he not only depicts physical likenesses of his subjects but divulges their psychological, inner lives. Elwyn Lynn says of him, 'Forces beneath the surface, the spirit beneath the flesh intrigue Vladas Meškėnas.'³⁰³ In his work the artist demonstrates an understanding of and empathy with the spiritual nature of the human being. Meškėnas says, 'Good portraits were created by Rembrandt, Velazquez, Franz Hals and Pierre Bonnard because they were able painters and understood how to honour human dignity. I don't like annihilation of humanity in contemporary art.'

A perfectionist in his work, Meškėnas says he loves each portrait as if it were his own child, but at the same time is never completely satisfied, always believing that his next work will be better. A man of temperamental, forceful yet compassionate nature, he seeks as subjects people who are kindred spirits and who have experienced life with intensity. Probably for this reason he has painted fellow-artists Weaver Hawkins, William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Lloyd Rees, Elwyn Lynn, John Olsen, Adomas Varnas and Donald Friend, to name just a few. Meškėnas considers sitting sessions exhausting, a spiritual duel of two personalities.

³⁰¹ Gleeson, James, *Australian Painters*, p. 373

³⁰² Biog/ed details recorded during interviews over many years with the artist.

³⁰³ Lynn, *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, p. 8

He was born, the youngest of three sons, on 17 February 1916, in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan in the Caucasus where his father Juozas had sought refuge during World War I. In 1921, the family succeeded in returning to their native Lithuania where Meškėnas senior obtained work in the Transport Department.

In 1934, Vladas Meškėnas left high school and enlisted in the Lithuanian Air Force; he proved, however, unsuited to such a career, and was advised to pursue his artistic calling. He became a freelance artist. In 1943 Meškėnas married a nursing sister and soon afterwards he and Danutė, his wife, were press-ganged by German SS troops to work in Germany. During the bombardment that followed they managed to escape and reach the comparative safety of a small township in the south of Austria where their two daughters were born: Nina in 1944 and Maria in 1946. In Austria Meškėnas met the expressionist painter, Pranas Domšaitis.

In 1949, Meškėnas and his family migrated to Australia. After a two-year work contract at the Victoria Army Barracks in Sydney, he worked at various factory jobs. He and his family, which now included a recently born son, Eugene, lived in very crowded conditions, and he had to paint outside in the backyard. They made regular visits to Sydney art galleries and bought illustrated art books and art reproductions whenever possible.³⁰⁴ At this time, Meškėnas experimented with oils and did hundreds of small portraits which may be regarded as exercises in preparation for important portraits later executed.

Meškėnas's *oeuvre* may be divided into two groups, both extensive: paintings and drawings. His paintings form two sub-groups: expressionistic and 'double-image'. This division is not necessarily chronological as the artist executes portraits in the style which he considers best suited to his subject.

Expressionist Painting: One of Meškėnas's earliest portraits in Australia is the oil painting *Family Portrait*, 1953, which was awarded first prize at the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Sydney. In the same dramatic style he painted his first major work, *Weaver Hawkins*, 1961, which was entered for the Archibald Prize Exhibition. This painting shows an artist who was injured in World War I and sustained a paralysed right hand. Meškėnas so admired the subject's personality that he later painted him with his wife. *Weaver Hawkins and His Wife*, 1962 was renamed *Resting Couple* (ill. 80). This painting was awarded the Helena Rubinstein Prize and was described by critic Alan McCulloch as 'the best portrait study in the competition, a careful and well integrated painting.'³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ A large reproduction of Gauguin's *Two Tahitian Women with Mango Blossoms*, 1899, hung in the 10m x 6m shack which was their house for their first six years in Australia.

³⁰⁵ McCulloch in *Meanjin*, Vol. 20, March, 1963.

All aspects of this double portrait are powerful: the composition is formal, the bright colours are applied with vigour, and resolute lines are used to depict the sitters. A sense of the couple's compassion towards each other unites the two figures. Elwyn Lynn says of the painting: 'The works on Mr and Mrs Weaver Hawkins and on Weaver Hawkins are fiercely expressionist tributes to dedicated and indomitable spirits, tributes that combine power and sympathy.'

306

In 1963, Meškėnas painted *Sir Russell Drysdale* (ill. 81). One of Australia's most important painters, Drysdale (1912-1981) was creator of an Australian idiom in his depiction of the Australian outback. It seems that Drysdale's spirit of perseverance attracted Meškėnas who executed the portrait in a slightly more dramatic and more formal manner than he had used in the Hawkins portraits. The virile strength of both the painter and his subject is apparent and, using strong lines and bold colours, Meškėnas portrays Drysdale in a powerful pose, confident and aware of his own worth. The red and black cubistic configurations of the subject's apparel and of the background fuse and reinforce the powerful self-assurance of the sitter.

Meškėnas's attention was equally attracted by the desperate and the defeated, as another major portrait, *William Dobell*, 1964 (ill. 82) shows. Dobell (1899-1970) is considered by Bernard Smith to be the foremost Australian portraitist, and to have had 'painterly quality and brilliance of characterisation unparalleled in twentieth-century portraiture.'³⁰⁷ At the time that Meškėnas met Dobell, the master had already been involved in a widely publicised art court case³⁰⁸ and was aware that he had a terminal illness. Meškėnas perceived him to be resigned and subdued, and felt an immediate rapport with him. Meškėnas recalled: 'Dobell reminded me of Lithuanian folk art, the image of the Sorrowful God.' The outcome is in fact a portrait of Dobell in a pose characteristic of the Sorrowful God, with head inclined and meditative expression. Meškėnas recalls that he worked spontaneously and as if in a frenzy in painting the portrait. The large painting, almost two metres in height, took only about two hours to complete and is rendered with a large palette knife almost totally in monochromatic blue-grey. The background is in unison with the subject, not only in its colour scheme but also in the artist's use of broad, parallel and slowly moving colour strokes. Elwyn Lynn comments that 'Sir William Dobell is not his slightly shy, slightly ironical self, but, in the best tradition of European expressionism, haggard, nagged with doubt and anguished with uncertainty.'³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Lynn in *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, p. 8

³⁰⁷ Smith, *Australian Painting*, p. 263

³⁰⁸ 1944 Archibald case in which his portrait of Joshua Smith was accused of 'pictorial defamation of character.'

³⁰⁹ Lynn in *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, p. 8

From about the middle sixties, Meškėnas became a freelance artist. He described the situation: 'My wife earns for bread, and I for salt. Everything is O.K.' For 'salt' he painted about 150 small portraits of people whose names he no longer remembers (charging an average fee of 5 pounds). Among his major works are portraits of painter and director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham, 1963, and of artist Lloyd Rees, 1965.

'Double-Image' painting: During the seventies Meškėnas developed a unique style which he calls 'double image'. This consists of veils of subtle colour superimposed on the whole picture plane, over the painted subject. An endless variety of ephemeral colour folds embrace the painted image. A double portrait, *Elwyn Lynn*, 1973 (ill. 83), is an outstanding example of Meškėnas's 'double image' style: Lynn is represented in two images, each of different mood and appearing as if in discussion with himself. The 'double image' is superimposed with painted colour veils. Although the subject is rendered in realistic style, the transparency and the multitude of modified hues endow the picture with a metaphysical atmosphere. Meškėnas's 'double image' works have an intrinsic similarity to a kaleidoscope, the movements of which change the colour of the facets; in Meškėnas's paintings the changes occur according to the position of observation.

Among other major works of this style are the portraits, *Donald Grant*, for which Meškėnas received the Sir Charles Lloyd Jones Prize at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, *Algis Kabaila* and *Vida Kabaila*, all painted in 1976. Probably one of the most imposing works is *Self Portrait*, 1978-1979 (ill. 84). At the time the artist termed it 'my requiem, my self destruction.'³¹⁰ In this work he combines several styles: super-realism, a modified form of action painting and 'double image', which in this case consists mainly of colour slashes. The painter's bitterness and disillusion over the lack of recognition of his artistic achievement and his economic difficulties are expressed here in the ungroomed face and the colour strokes sweeping across it.

With 'double image' technique, the element of spontaneity decreases and the artist commits himself to working on a single portrait for months, even sometimes a whole year, in order to veil every inch of his work with a transparent mist of colour. It is understandable that he could not sustain or did not desire to work in only one style: he began to use several styles according to his mood.

In the seventies Meškėnas leaned more strongly towards realistic and impressionistic interpretations of his subjects, forsaking the previously favoured expressionistic style. Inevitably there were exceptions. His colour

³¹⁰ G. Kazokas in *Aidai* (Echoes), No. 9, 1978, p. 401.

mellowed and he showed a preference for muted hues and sometimes even monochrome. After *Self Portrait*, Meškėnas left for the USA. Among many portraits that he later painted of prominent Lithuanians there, the portrait of *Professor Adomas Varnas*, 1978 (ill. 85), is the most spontaneous and most painterly work in the whole of Meškėnas's *oeuvre*. He applied with great ease dabs of gold and grey paint to form a mosaic of irregular geometric configurations of the sitter's countenance and of the background. Varnas's features, dignified by age, give the impression of a by-gone prophet.

After Meškėnas's return to Australia, another exceptional portrait of this period is the impressionistically rendered *Vincas Kazokas*, 1981 (ill. 86). Kazokas (1919-1984), editor of the Lithuanian weekly *Mūsų Pastogė*, was a personal friend of the painter. In the portrait his image is rendered in an harmonious colour scheme of soft greys and subdued blues that reveal the sitter's reserved, stable personality. More pronounced realistic tendencies are obvious in Meškėnas's well known portrait, *Donald Friend*, 1985 (ill. 87).³¹¹ At the time, Friend (1915-1990), painter and writer, was terminally ill. In contrast to the portrait of Dobell, Friend is represented not in meditative mood but as an arrogant and defiant person. The subject is seated in an imaginary classical triangle, and his weathered face is rendered with thickly applied paint, layer upon layer, producing complicated colour combinations. It reveals with honesty an unadorned countenance exuding self-importance and contempt. Another portrait of this period is *Desiderius Orban*, 1986 (ill. 88).

The portraits so far discussed are characteristically virile representations of Meškėnas's subjects treated with seriousness and psychological insight. Although Meškėnas is attracted to older, time-honoured and worldly-wise people, there is a place in his *oeuvre* for young, beautiful women and children. In these works the subjects' treatment becomes more subtle and lyrical, and expressionistic boldness is avoided. Instead, he accentuates the soft, serpentine line, uses a warmer, more impressionistic palette and applies the paint smoothly. Generally, in women's and children's portraits, he strives for harmony and concord, e.g. *Judy Pongrass*, 1972 (ill. 89) and *Two Sisters*, 1984. He treats the theme of motherhood with special sensitivity, e.g. *Mother and Child*, 1974 (ill. 90).

Between painting works of high intensity Meškėnas indulges in the sheer relish of images and colour by painting genre compositions, e.g. *Paddington Market*, 1972 (ill. 91) and *The Beatniks of Paddington*, 1976. These are sophisticated compositions with a conglomerate of images and superimposed 'double image'. They recreate panoramic scenes of lively, everyday human activity in streets and markets. Such genre compositions

³¹¹ Meškėnas painted two more portraits of Donald Friend in 1987 and 1989.

executed in 'double image' style require an amount of work at least equal to the 'double image' portraits but are less stressful for the artist.

Drawings: Meškėnas showed exceptional talent from an early age and, even at school, was able to produce remarkable likenesses of people. His oldest surviving drawing, *Father*, 1930 (ill. 92) was done at the age of fourteen and reflects his study of the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Although executed in realistic style, it shows the young artist's awareness of his subject's emotional experiences and has an evocative quality that suggests compassion. For his pencil drawing, *Mother's Sorrow*, 1941 he gained an award in Lithuania for the best depiction of the atrocities of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania.

In Australia, Meškėnas produced literally hundreds of pastel sketches. They were created spontaneously in minutes and display at its best his powerful use of line, at the same time instantly depicting likeness and inner personality. Such works as *Art Dealer*, 1958 (ill. 93), *John Olsen*, 1962 (ill. 94), *Donald Friend*, 1985 (ill. 95), are examples. Sometimes his sketches serve as preliminary studies for portraits. Comparing the sketches with the paintings, one can see the discipline Meškėnas imposes upon himself in applying colour, obtaining texture and creating harmony among the multi-layered planes of colour. In contrast to the 'soul-searching' portrait drawings, his sketches of nudes are exercises of volume in space with an intuitive sense of composition, and are executed with immediacy, spontaneity and power. e.g. *Nude*, 1974 (ill. 96).

Although Meškėnas has had no formal training, he considers his greatest teacher to be Leonardo da Vinci whose illustrations he meticulously copied in high school. Since adolescence he has admired Rembrandt's portraits for their compassion, drama and insight into psyche. Meškėnas's work is an idiosyncratic mix of many styles and trends of modern art: expressionism gave him the freedom to display the sitter's personalities in an emphatic way; impressionism and fauvism revealed his appreciation of colour; and the principles of cubism and hard-line style appear in the backgrounds of his portraits. His invention of colour veils (or 'double image') endows his realistic, often dramatic, paintings with poetry and lyricism.

Meškėnas prefers to live and work in isolation. His only solo exhibition, at the Settlers' Gallery in Paddington, Sydney, in 1977, lasted only three days. He has, however participated in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions, in the Sulman, the Royal Easter Show, the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize and the Archibald Prize exhibitions. In the last he has been thirteen times a finalist. This public exposure has made his work known also to overseas art dealers and he has received a number of offers of commissions from the

Rockefeller family in the USA and the Rothschild family in Switzerland, all of which, for health reasons, he has declined.

He is critical of his own and of other artists' work. After visiting art galleries in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and smaller cities of the USA, he concluded that 'there are only a few good portraits in the art world. The rest are reproductions or disfigurements or merely a person's likeness.' Meškėnas's powerful yet sensitive portraits and figurative drawings continue to enhance Australian portraiture with profundity, intensity and deep psychological insight in a unique coalescence of virility and subtlety.

Included among the Sydney Vanguard Artists Group is colourful and passionate artist **Leonas Urbonas**.³¹² At different times of his life he has been a painter, sculptor, book illustrator, landscape artist, essayist, philosopher, lecturer, orator, clairvoyant and faith healer. He has held more than forty solo exhibitions in Australia, the United States and Canada; he has participated in many prestigious group exhibitions and competitions including those held by the Contemporary Art Society and the Sulman, Blake, Waratah and Sydney Royal Easter Show; and he has been awarded at least eleven major art prizes. His work captured the attention of visiting art connoisseur and collector Vincent Price who purchased twelve of his paintings. Two more were bought for the Sears-Roebuck collection in the USA.

Urbonas is perhaps best described as 'a child of his time', revealing in his widely varied work his dynamic, passionate individuality and the many personal relationships he has had. He says that 'for better or worse, I always created for the beautiful women in my life.' Basically he is an abstract painter, but it is possible to detect in his work aspects of surrealism, action painting, hard-edge and mysticism. Everything he does combines to produce something new and fresh, making his work unique and worthy of the adjective, 'Urbonian'. Donald Brook writes that 'Leonas Urbonas ... is a painter with a turbulent, romantic imagination that functions best under close restraint. His smaller ... works have the same sort of complexity and evocative power as a high voltage spark curtain, as a map of nerve ganglia.'³¹³

In Urbonas's art, key concepts are spontaneity, subconsciousness, ecstasy, trance, vision and fantasy. These are embodied in his paintings, and to a lesser degree in his sculptures, in the complexity of line, form and movement and in the visual release of emotional and mental energies.

³¹² Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 12 Feb. 1988, from many telephone conversations and from the artist's unpublished notes.

³¹³ Donald Brook in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1969.

He was born the second son of Ignas and Uršulė (*nee* Širvytė) Urbonas on 19 April 1922 in the Zarasai county of North-Eastern Lithuania. His father owned a small farm comprising five hectares of swampy land and, despite the supplement of his shoemaking trade, could barely earn enough to feed the family of four children. In the summers the father worked on other people's farms and during those times the family moved frequently from one village to another. During the Depression of the 1930s, Urbonas senior found himself without work and took his family to live with his cousin who had four children, among them the future poet, Paulius Sirvyš.

Urbonas's childhood memories, however, are not of hardship but, rather, of his father's enthralling winter tales of ghosts and the spirits that the children believed were surrounding them, of family singing, of picturesque lakes and forests, of snowfields transforming the landscape into strangely beautiful vistas. Urbonas writes: 'As long as I can remember I was bewitched by the beauty and mystery of Nature.' He was fascinated also by the worlds that he and his cousin Paulius, inseparable friends and avid readers, found in books. He did well at school, and from the age of fourteen, supported himself by tutoring other children. At high school he impressed with his retentive memory and his talent for representation. His high school art teacher Belzakienė and her husband, music teacher Belzakis, recognised Urbonas's talent and advised him to concentrate on visual art. They provided him with paints and other art materials.

He completed studies at Zarasai High School in 1941. By this time the Nazis had closed tertiary educational institutions and ordered young Lithuanian men either to form an SS battalion and fight on the Russian front or go to Germany to work. Urbonas hid on his father's farm. In 1944 he joined the wave of refugees fleeing to the West, and was captured and taken into the German army where he acted as an interpreter. After the war he reached a refugee camp in the German town of Hanau where about 4,000 Lithuanians were housed in a former military barracks. Urbonas volunteered to help repair one of the buildings in order that an art school could be established in the camp. The teachers were Mikas Šilelis, b. 1893, who lectured on History of Art, Kostas Jezerskas, b. 1917, on Drawing, and Juozas Kaminskas, b. 1898, on Painting. Besides Urbonas, students included Balys Milaknis, Vytautas Ignas, Jonas Kelečius and others, twelve future artists in all. Art materials were provided by UNRRA. Urbonas attended this institution during 1945 and 1946 and then enrolled at Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste (State Academy of Creative Arts) in Stuttgart. There he learned much from the great teacher of abstract art, Willi Baumeister who, because he was an abstractist, earlier had

fallen from Nazi favour. The other teachers were realists and required traditional academic drawing and classical composition.

In Stuttgart, Urbonas met Estonian playwright Talva Tuldar who bore him a son, Tauras, in 1947. In 1948 Urbonas migrated to Australia and, on completion of his work contract in Queensland's sugar cane plantations, took a job as a shift-work polisher and electroplater in a factory at St. Peters in Sydney. In 1957, he and Tuldar separated and their son remained with his mother. In his loneliness, Urbonas turned to art and psychological, philosophical and spiritual literature, especially the mystic, Eastern religions. He formed a close friendship with another Lithuanian, graphic artist Algirdas Šimkūnas and at Šimkūnas's suggestion, joined the Sydney Contemporary Art Society in 1958. He belonged also to the Metropolitan Motor Scooter Club and to the Divers Club. Many weekends were spent on excursions to the mountains or diving in the waters around Sydney. He says that these experiences gave him inspiration for his paintings.

From the beginning of his artistic career in Australia in 1958 until the present time, Urbonas's work has undergone a number of changes. It is possible to identify four partly overlapping periods:

1958 to the end of the sixties: a searching period;

The seventies : a biomorphic period;

The early eighties - a sonorous period;

From the mid-eighties - an abstract sculpture period.

The first period: This was a time of searching for an individual style. Although Urbonas was familiar with abstract art, especially from his association with teacher Willi Baumeister, he did not practise it until he came to Australia. The growing interest of Sydney artists in abstract art, especially following the 1953 French Painting Today Exhibition, and his discussions with Šimkūnas were important factors in determining Urbonas's decision to work in abstract style.

He began to exhibit in group shows held by the Contemporary Art Society and the Macquarie Galleries and in competitions such as the Archibald Prize Exhibition, as well as in charity shows. In 1959, he received his first award: a 'Highly Commended' in the Rockdale Art Society Exhibition for a semi-abstract oil, *The Call*. He says that to prove to himself that he had the ability to paint in academic style, he entered a pastel painting, *Mother*, 1959 in the Mosman Council's Art Exhibition and gained first prize. Although satisfied by the result, he did not return to realistic painting.

In 1961 Urbonas met New Zealand model, June Sutton, his future wife, who became a great inspiration. She urged him to paint on a large scale as this was a current trend. Consequently, in 1963 Urbonas painted his first three large works, *On the Threshold* (ill. 97), *Under Capricorn* (ill. 98) and *Threshold* (ill. 99), which he exhibited with the Contemporary Art Society.³¹⁴ *On the Threshold* was included in an interstate travelling exhibition that followed the Sydney showing, and attracted the attention of art critics. It is a fantasy landscape, rendered in brown monochrome illuminated with golden yellow. The broad, irregular floating planes divided by rhythmic, dark folds of colour create a dream-like image of an enchanted place beyond worldly reality and illuminated by lightning for a fraction of time. This transient scene is permeated by a romantic and mystical atmosphere.

With *Threshold*, Urbonas realised the spontaneity of subconscious power when the hand starts to paint unpremeditated emblems and signs. He says he felt on the threshold of cosmic energy, entering and merging with it. Katherine White, an American art critic, writes:

Threshold is a painting of lurid dramatic force with tantalizing religious overtones. Soft matt tans, browns and heavy blind purples, a cool blue, an empty yellow strike themselves upon the page like rooted, subconscious images. Jewels and monsters, crosses, arches, tombs and tunnels, wheels and eyes, turbans and eternity all can come fleeting through the mind.³¹⁵

In *Under Capricorn*, 1963, the volcanic eruption of the subconscious manifests itself in agitated tornadoes, whirlpools and vortices. The undetermined forms collide blindly with each other, the colours gushing in clouds and dripping across the large painting. James Gleeson writes, 'The mood is invariably *molto agitato* ... Nothing is fixed and still, and this is disconcerting when you have the feeling that the paint is really describing earth and rock ... It is this irrationality that links Urbonas with the surrealists.'³¹⁶

It would be possible to describe *Under Capricorn* as an action painting were it not for the frequent ambiguous metaphors that evoke contradictory images. It seems as if inhibited powers are being unleashed. The artist describes his creative process: 'The fervour of experimentation captivated me completely ... All I cared for was to follow the visions and images as fast as they appeared ... I tried to listen only to the most spontaneous impulses ... and found it possible to will oneself into a creative, trance-like state.'³¹⁷ And indeed, this 'fervour of experimentation' was followed by masses of new, large paintings,

³¹⁴ The artist claims to have completed the three paintings in one night.

³¹⁵ Katherine White in *Fine Arts*, Vol. 13, No. 660, 1967.

³¹⁶ Gleeson, 'Disturbing Paintings' in *Sinn*, Sydney, 21 Jan. 1964.

³¹⁷ Leonas Urbonas, 'A Journey into the Subconscious', *Lituanus*, Vol. 17, 1971, p. 22.

all emphasising different structural elements: movement, rhythm, colour splashes and indescribable shapes.

Urbonas had now developed a painting technique requiring a new approach and new tools. He explained that he would lay rolls of paper across the garage floor, and have ready several buckets of paint. As well as paint brush and palette knife, he used a vacuum cleaner, garden hose, timber slats, a household broom or a bricklayer's trowel. By manipulating this equipment he was able to control his painting of large areas and form colour folds, vary the intensity of the paint and produce sweeping, undulating shapes. To enrich the texture, he often sprinkled sand, cement or sawdust on the paint; drops of methylated spirit were also used to create subtle highlights. These large creations became the bases for further work with paintbrush when the artist would make full use of artistic accident to convey his predominant theme: the metaphysical journey from darkness to light. This is particularly obvious in the painting, *June*, 1965 (ill. 100), where Urbonas introduces a lit opening in the midst of darkness. In the same contemplative mood are *Enlightenment* (ill. 101) and *Revelation* (ill. 102), both 1966. These 'soulscapes' echo vestiges of the meditative aspects of Lithuanian mythology. The yearning for the unknown and eternal is like the resonance of slow, sad Lithuanian songs ascending from the artist's subconscious to the surface of reality.

The majority of his paintings from this period are strongly structured, probably influenced by the coolness and objectivity of the hard-edge approach, but show also an intensity of emotion. There is no sharp division of style in Urbonas's paintings of this period: as well as those already mentioned, there are turbulent, volcanic paintings such as *Autumnal Rays*, 1966 (ill. 103). Although generally his use of colour is restricted and many paintings are executed in sombre monochrome, in others bright highlights sometimes emerge from dark backgrounds.

Although oil and acrylic paint were his preferred media, to compete with the watercolourists he painted *Abstract*, 1964, a watercolour which gained first prize at the Miranda Fair Exhibition. As further proof to himself of his ability with watercolour, he entered *Mellita*, 1965, in the Australian Fashion Fabric Design Awards of that year and received first prize of 750 pounds and a gold medal. However, after that he did not return to watercolour but began to experiment with PVA acrylic paint which at that time was new to the art world. About this time Urbonas, encouraged by his growing success, gave up his factory job to become a full-time, freelance artist. He painted hundreds of pictures so quickly that later, on examining them, he says it seemed as if he were seeing them for the first time. He recalls that he felt as if in a whirlpool, eager to follow a subconscious urge to register his visions, emotions and

aspirations. His volcanic, impassioned work impressed visiting American art connoisseurs and collectors, and their purchases of his paintings gave him further encouragement. After six one-man shows, highly favourable reviews and many awards, Urbonas aspired to greater recognition in the United States, the country, he says, 'where the waves of art rise, but not where they finish.'

In 1966, he left by himself for Chicago, taking with him 250 of his paintings, rolled into a large bundle. There the Lithuanian community helped him prepare his pictures for an exhibition in the Čiurlionis Gallery. This was a great success and encouraged the artist to prepare for a forthcoming international show at the QANTAS Gallery on Fifth Avenue in New York. In a city with hundreds of art galleries and thousands of artists seeking recognition, Urbonas nevertheless drew attention. He was included in the *New York Times* list of exhibitors and favourably mentioned in other sections of the New York press. At an international exhibition, The Thirty Five, held in Palm Springs, California in 1967, Urbonas's paintings were hung alongside those of Picasso, Salvador Dali, Diego Rivera, Nag Arnoldi and Rodriguez.

Probably his most enthusiastic reception was at Cleveland's Gallery International. It is interesting to note how art critics cope with unfamiliar work. Art critic Marie Kirkwood likened Urbonas's mystic work to Australian Aboriginal art which, she said, 'relates to symbolism unknown to the rest of the world.'³¹⁸ Another art critic, Katherine White, wrote: 'He uses a range of techniques including finger painting, carving thin layers of pigment with knives, folding paper over wet colour to let pattern splurge at will, and using big flexible brushes to flow over a surface. His pictures are like the dark centres of dreams, full of forgotten textures and emotions. The stuff is powerful, unimpeded, done at high risk with a rich and lively eye.'³¹⁹

Australian correspondents sent enthusiastic reports back to Australia, but, as the artist found later, most of these were never published. Urbonas became a celebrity in the United States and parties and dinners were arranged in his honour. He says he again fell in love and neglected invitations from millionaires and art collectors. He writes, 'Love is power. Through love one finds out more of oneself.' An exhibition of his work in Toronto at the Gallery Yonge in 1967 was a great success and all his paintings were sold. This motivated him to prepare for another Canadian exhibition and during one night, working in what he has described as a trance-like state, he painted sixty large pictures.

Soon afterwards, the artist returned triumphantly to Australia. For a time he painted in series and exhibited in the Macquarie Galleries in Sydney. During 1969, Urbonas produced some two thousand small-dimension pieces, many of

³¹⁸ *New York and Brooklyn Daily*, 9 Dec. 1967.

³¹⁹ Katherine White in *Fine Arts*, 30 Jan. 1967.

them rendered with agitated, passionate emotion and having minute, decorative detail. Others are more sober, as in the *Link's* series, 1969 (ill. 104), where the compositional elements, beautiful and sonorous in themselves, are arranged in rather classical manner. All works show a fluent and effortless technique. James Gleeson writes:

The paintings of Leonas Urbonas are remarkable for their extraordinary inventiveness. He is an astonishingly prolific painter, and for the opening day of his exhibition he is showing 16 large paintings, together with a group of smaller works which are to be changed daily until 173 of them have been shown. Works like 'Link', 'Limit', 'Circle', and 'Transfiguration' venture into new areas, but they do so with the assurance and authority of someone who has found in them a form of expression that is completely congenial to him.³²⁰

Although his Australian reception was warm and reviews favourable, the success he had had in America lured him back and in late 1969, together with his wife June and 520 paintings, Urbonas set out for North America for a second time. During eighteen months there, he held eleven one-man shows in Toronto, Chicago and San Francisco, mainly for Lithuanian communities. Following an exhibition in Cleveland, Roger Welchans, Head of the Fine Arts Department of the John Carroll University, invited him to accept a position as artist-in-residence. However, he says he declined the offer because he had lost his heart to a beautiful Lithuanian nun, Elena, half his age, whom he decided to take to Australia. Their son Aras was born in Sydney in 1972.

The second period: This was a biomorphic period during which Urbonas was striving to reconcile biological processes with cosmic events. Inspired, he says, by his love of Elena, he painted ecstatically, producing a further three hundred works which he exhibited at the Barefoot, Holdsworth and Woollahra Galleries. These paintings are emotional and erotic and allude to human and cosmic symbols. Such paintings as *Cosmic Storm* (ill. 105), *Storm before Dawn*, and *The Birth of an Inimical Planet* (ill. 106) all 1974, reveal the artist's preoccupation with passion and blind desire which he transposes to an outer world. The technique is streaming and light but at times the sharp lines drawn across some paintings, e.g. *The Birth of an Inimical Planet*, betray the desperation of the artist's emotions. Despite the circles, evocative of lofty and distant planets, they suggest also wombs and germinating cells and often convey a claustrophobic, egocentric feeling with strong sexual connotations.

From time to time Urbonas departed from his 'high voltage' works and produced pristine and minimal studies, imbued with innocence and lucidity, such as *Calligraphic Sketch*, 1974 (ill. 107). As well as painting at this time,

³²⁰ Gleeson, 'Art Review', *Sun*, Sydney, 30 Apr. 1969.

with help from Elena he wrote and published his first essay on subconscious creativity entitled 'A Journey into the Subconscious'.³²¹ During this period he participated as well in art seminars and workshops and delivered art lectures. In 1974 he was asked by the Newcastle Society of Artists to join Stan Ostojak-Kotkowski, Reinis Zusters and others³²² in a series of lectures and demonstrations at Newcastle University and, as well, he provided the Lithuanian press with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of art news and his personal observations about art forms and art movements. His relationship with Elena did not last and they separated in 1975. Urbonas took this as a personal catastrophe. Alone again, he concentrated on spiritual studies, on intense writing and on mysticism.

The third period: Urbonas's pictorial work slowly took on a different character: he learned to say more with less. A conscious and cautious approach became evident in carefully balanced composition, fewer pictorial elements, sparing yet effective use of colour and barely perceptible movement. In *Far Call*, 1982 (ill. 108) Urbonas depicts cosmic events with assurance and affection yet free from turbulent, ardent passion, the burden of which is replaced by a newly acquired serenity. The artist uses his virtuoso technique more deliberately and achieves subtle and amazingly varied textures. In the eighties the movement in his pictures is no longer *molto agitato* but rather *andantecantabile*. It seems that the spiritual serenity, so vehemently sought, has been found.

The fourth period: During the eighties, Urbonas's pictorial output decreased as he directed all his physical energies into the establishment of the Aras Art Centre, five acres of bushland in the Mittagong area which he envisages as an informal art school and a gathering place for artists of the future. Lack of finance slowed progress yet Urbonas has eventually turned his bushland into 'five acres of art work' with landscaping, ponds, rockeries and sculptures. His sculptures are abstract constructions in two basic media: found objects and stone. Those made from found objects are welded, some with open design and others solid structures in fantastic shapes. All are based on sound constructive principles, e.g. *Twins*, 1977 (ill. 109).

Equally impressive are the stone sculptures which are large-scale and form an integral part of the landscape. Some are eight or more metres in length and up to five metres in height. The artist describes them as 'pictures in space', able to be viewed from many perspectives and always surprising the observer with their diversity. Their 'total-art' concept includes, in addition to boulders

³²¹ Excerpts were published in *Lituanus*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1971.

³²² The others were Alex Danko, Douglas Dundas, Max Miller and Mervyn Moriarty.

and river stones, cement pedestals, the music of flowing water and reflections in ponds. One example is *Singing Wall* (ill. 110). This monumental structure gains its name from the sounds of the water flowing down the four levels of the miniature waterfall forming part of the sculpture. *Singing Wall* is an evolving structure, the final form of which has not yet been decided by the artist. The solid section comprises a number of asymmetric columns of varied sculptured shapes decorated with an abstract design in black and red slate and crowned with sandstone boulders. The beauty of the single elements is combined into one dignified entity, the interrelationship of mass and space enhancing further the powerful and emotional creation.

Urbonas's sculptures, like his paintings, are unique and profoundly personal statements. They have become a special feature of the Aras Art Centre which is now a popular tourist attraction. By 1988 it has been visited by about 5,000 local and overseas people.³²³ Annual art shows are held there. Urbonas has frequent philosophical discussions with visitors. He also practises as a clairvoyant, claiming to possess healing powers.

Urbonas has taken an active part in local cultural life. As well as regular art exhibitions at 'Aras', he has organized five one-man shows in the Berrima Gallery, taught art for a year at Mittagong Girls High School, delivered a paper, 'Building in a Large Landscape' at an Architects' Convention in Bowral in 1977, donated his work to local charities, and written on matters of art, spiritual life and ultimate human aims. Yet, he says he feels excluded from the cultural mainstream and believes that his talents are not being fully utilised. He often says: 'Use me, just use me'. In an interview, Urbonas was asked, 'What is art?' He answered without hesitation, 'Art is adventure and discovery of other worlds unknown even to the artist.'

DELAYED ARTISTS

In contrast to many of the Vanguard Group, the artists grouped under this heading all married. The group comprises four women and one man who, largely because they gave priority to child-rearing and establishing homes, found it necessary to delay their artistic endeavours for up to fifteen years after migrating to Australia. Some had received fragmentary art training in Lithuanian schools in Germany; others obtained their art education entirely in Australia.

³²³ Taken from the *Visitors' Book*, 1988.

Ceramist and teacher Jolanta Janavičius,³²⁴ *nee* Garolytė, is a prolific artist although her art education was interrupted many times. From 1970 to 1985 she held twenty solo exhibitions in Australia and overseas, participated in many group shows and represented Australia in international ceramic exhibitions in Italy and France.

She was born on 24 October 1929 in Kaunas. Her father, Jeronimas Garolis, was a Lithuanian Air Force officer and her mother, Elžbieta, worked as a translator. Jolanta's education was often disrupted because of the family's moves from place to place. Her childhood memories are dominated by her experience of having to hide in order to avoid deportation to Siberia.³²⁵ In 1944, the family joined the mass of refugees fleeing from Lithuania and lived temporarily on a farm in south-west Germany where she recalls that she often had to help plough the fields by hand, there being no horses. After the war she began to study art during her secondary education in French and German schools in Freiburg-im-Breisgau. In 1948 she enrolled at L'École des Arts et Métiers, where a ceramics class was conducted by Eleonora Marčiulionis and a drawing class by Teisutis Zikaras. In 1949, just before her high school final examinations, the family migrated to Australia.

From Bonegilla (Vic.) reception camp, Jolanta was assigned to work in Brisbane, her mother and father in Melbourne, and her brother in Tasmania, and it was only after her mother's protestations that the family was sent together to Sydney. Jolanta and her mother fulfilled their two-year contracts as cleaners at the University of Sydney.

In 1950 she enrolled at East Sydney Technical College to study ceramics. In 1952 she married Lithuanian artist and writer, Jurgis Janavičius. Later, while raising their three children, Jolanta Janavičius continued to experiment in ceramics at home. From 1965 to 1967 she studied art at East Sydney Technical College under Mollie Douglas, Derek Smith and Bernard Sahm. From 1967 to 1970 she participated in workshops and seminars conducted by Hanada, Michael Cardew, Paul Soldner and Harry Hollander. Between 1971 and 1975 she attended private painting and drawing classes under Ross Davis and Rodney Milgate. Between 1980 and 1982 she undertook studies in a Workers Adult Education Fine Arts course held at the University of Sydney. Overseas study tours took her to Italy, Greece and Crete and she says that she felt an 'intense affinity' with the art of the earlier cultures of those

³²⁴ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 15 Feb. 1988.

³²⁵ Her father was hiding elsewhere and every night the family had to crawl into an attic. Jolanta's responsibility was to camouflage their exit door - which was in a kitchen cupboard - with a large ladle. After a few weeks of such life she says her mother gave up: she packed warm clothes, dried some bread and decided to attend a picnic, specially arranged for Lithuanian army officers and their families, during which, according to informers, the anticipated deportation was to take place. Fortunately, for them, on that day - 22 June, 1941 - the war broke out. (As told to the author during interview)

places. In 1976 she attended a ceramics course conducted by Nino Caruso in Rome, in 1978 she studied with the prominent Lithuanian sculptor Aleksandras Kašuba in New York and in 1984 made an expedition to the Himalayas where she was the first Australian artist to hold an exhibition in Kathmandu after the establishment there of an Australian Embassy.

Janavičius admires the ceramic work of Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro and Peter Voulkos, particularly for their spontaneity and innovation. She has been inspired also by the natural environment of the Australian outback. Although Jolanta Janavičius's *oeuvre* has undergone change, one cardinal property has remained constant -- an inherent simplicity. Her work may be divided into three periods:

1965 to 1974: a conventional period;

1975 to 1984: a rustic period;

1985 onwards: a colour and glaze period.

Conventional period: At this time she concentrated mainly on control of the medium and produced functional pottery such as bowls, jugs, cups and saucers by using a throwing method. The form of the items is conventional, plain and symmetrical, and they resemble Lithuanian peasant pottery. Finished with the customary brown glaze, the pieces are embellished with simple Lithuanian folkloric or pseudo-folkloric ornamentation (ill. 111).

Rustic period: From 1975, Janavičius experimented with a modelling technique and produced work in various forms, including cylindrical vases and large platters over half a metre in diameter. Their common feature was a surface of exposed, natural clay, unglazed and uncoloured, in rough, pure form. The traditional ornamentation of her earlier work was replaced by incised paintings depicting scenes from her travels, as in *Cylindrical Vase*, 1977 (ill. 112), or by echoes of ancient Greek and Minoan cultures, as in *Oziris*, 1977 (ill. 113). As the latter work shows, Janavičius turned accidental imperfections such as cracks, indentations and impurities to aesthetic advantage. Towards the end of 1978, she reached her most Australian style and used eucalypt leaves, bark and seeds of various native trees as decoration, e.g. *Bark Vase*, 1978 (ill. 114). The unglazed, uncoloured surfaces of such work create an emotional impression of simplicity. The pieces are imbued with a primeval spirituality and a feeling of closeness to the earth. Two examples are *Gum Trunk* (ill. 115) and *Genesis* (ill. 116), both 1981. Referring to the Australian character of her work, reviewer

John Millington writes, 'There is no doubt that Jolanta ... would make a superb ambassador abroad for Australia'.³²⁶

Her work of this second period was modelled either by hand, as for instance, vases, or by foot, as in the case of platters which because of their size needed to be flattened by weight and then trimmed to the required shape. Janavičius prefers to work with white, New Zealand clay because of its colour, strength and pliability. By firing her artefacts to 1285°C, she turns them into stoneware.

Colour and Glaze period: Janavičius began to explore the potential of colour and glaze, ceramic features she had hitherto avoided. She showed an eagerness to experiment with strong, bright colours, and over a lengthy period, found a method whereby she could preserve the brilliance of red in the firing process. She changed her mode of surface decoration from incising to painting. This requires swift, decisive action. Janavičius explains: 'When the glaze is applied, the design must be painted immediately and very quickly, before the glaze becomes floury ... There is no time to play. It is spontaneous. I never work from sketches. The painting comes from within'.³²⁷ Although her ceramic paintings appear to be spontaneously executed, and their undulating lines float with a seeming carelessness in the brightest of colours, they are really premeditated.

She searched for new forms in ceramics and produced long, coolamon-shaped dishes decorated with sunny Australian landscape colours and images (ill. 117). Sometimes she produced matching jugs to form sets. She also experimented with constructive ceramics, with numerous particles or tiles arranged in various patterns, as well as with sculptural ceramics, drawings on paper and mixed media 'happenings'. It seems that Janavičius's dispiriting experiences in childhood and early adolescence determined for a long time the constrained and sombre characteristics of her ceramics. She says that it was almost forty years before she was able to produce in a joyous and colourful way. Janavičius is actively involved in a number of Australian and Lithuanian community activities. Since 1975 she has taught ceramics at Mulawa Women's Prison in Sydney; she was responsible for establishing a potters' workshop for the Holroyd Arts and Crafts Society at Merrylands, and she conducts pottery classes at the Lane Cove Community Centre and at the Potters' Wheel Society at Neutral Bay. In the Lithuanian community she is active in the Scouts movement and participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

³²⁶ John Millington in 'Australian Bush: Spiritual Obsession', in *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 19 Oct. 1985.

³²⁷ Dorothy Carter in 'Grand Designs on Ceramics' in *Herald*, Melbourne, 27 May 1987.

Jurgis Janavičius³²⁸ is a self-taught painter, art photographer, poet and writer. His approach to art is casual and carefree. His swift sketches are like snapshots from the window of a speeding car, and capture the essence of particular moments or places. It seems that Janavičius neither has the time nor feels the necessity to labour on intricate compositions or the studied application of paint. By never correcting or changing anything he retains spontaneity and simplicity in his work.

Jurgis Janavičius was born, the second of three sons, in Šiauliai on 28 June, 1926. His family had a long socialist background: his grandfather had financed the publication of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* in Polish; his father, an economist, had supported the Socialist poet, Jonas Biliūnas. Yet, when the Soviets occupied Lithuania in 1940, the father was among the first to be arrested and the family property was seized. Fearing for their lives, the family split and each member lived separately. In this way, they succeeded in avoiding arrest and deportation and in 1944 were able to flee to Germany with the father who had escaped from the custody of the Russians.

At that time Jurgis Janavičius had completed his secondary education and had studied Agriculture for a year in Lithuania. He continued to study different subjects, Economics in Germany in 1946 and 1947 and Ancient History at the University of Sydney in 1951 and 1952. During his early years in Australia, to which he migrated with his two brothers in 1948 and where all three worked as labourers on the Warragamba Dam Project, he associated with many literary and artistic people and was a personal friend of Šalkauskas, Bistrickas, Šimkūnas and Kubbos. His elder brother, Vytautas, is a well known writer and has been the stimulus for Janavičius to express his feelings in poetry as well as in painting.

Married in 1953 to Jolanta Garolytė, he has three children. In 1966, he graduated from the Snowy Mountains Authority Field Course and began work as a hydrographer. Janavičius's artistic activities fall into two categories: visual art and literature. In visual art he is active as a painter and art photographer.

Painting: His paintings can be divided into two groups: landscapes from the sixties and cityscapes from the eighties. Janavičius's work as a hydrographer gave him many opportunities to discover the beauty of the Australian landscape which he painted or sketched on the spot, without corrections or additions. Although his style is influenced by the free, fluent line of both Klee and Miro, he does not intend or pretend to investigate either the conscious or the subconscious human mind. His intention is to render his first impressions of visible reality in linear, sketch-like drawings.

³²⁸ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 15 Feb. 1988.

In 1964 he and his countryman geologist Kazys Kemežys held a joint exhibition at the Garema Hall in Canberra. An example from this exhibition is *A Hump in the Plain South of Bonley Creek*, 1964 (ill. 118), which consists of a single, horizontal line with several patches of colour hastily and casually applied. *The Black Mountain West of Blayney*, 1964 (ill. 119), although containing more objects, is treated in the same hurried manner. Both works have an open composition, both are linear and colour is applied either flat, as for the sky in the latter, or with minimal modulation of tone. In spite of, or possibly because of, such a reductive approach Janavičius's work has a primaeval vitality. Art critic Donald Brook describes some of Janavičius's pastels as '... quite magical. Janavičius's strength lies in the resolute exercise of what one can call a visual sensibility.'³²⁹

In 1981, after retirement, Janavičius returned to study, spending the next two years in a Fine Arts course at the University of Sydney. From 1982 his interest in visual art intensified and he began to paint and participate frequently in group art exhibitions in Sydney. In the eighties his subject matter was urban life with its fast rhythm and the impatience of frustrated drivers. *Crows Nest Junction*, 1985 (ill. 120), is representative of his cityscape drawings. With a few simple lines and patches of colour, he captures traffic hazards with a sense of humour. To intensify the impression of crowding and confusion Janavičius selects an upright format, stacks one vehicle on another, and completes the picture with a multi-storey building as the pinnacle of all.

Photography: He has held two photographic exhibitions, the first in 1976 at the Old Bakery Gallery in Sydney. This comprised exotic pictures of New Guinea, mainly of native chiefs and warriors in full attire, with spears and shields. His second photographic exhibition was at the North Sydney Public Library in 1981 and included photographs of Sydney and European cities.

Literature: In the sixties in Canberra, Janavičius began to write in English. A book of his poetry, *Journey to the Moon*, was published in 1971. He and his friend Kazys Kamežys then decided to collect and publish the work of young Australian writers. The result was a publication called *Poetry and Prose Broadsheet* which Janavičius edited for fourteen issues. This put him in contact with young Australian writers and gave him, he says, a feeling of belonging in Australia. When later he moved to Sydney the publication of the *Broadsheet* was continued in Canberra by Australian writers.

In Sydney, in conjunction with poet Almis Jūragis, Janavičius began publication of *Poezijos lakštai* (Poetry Broadsheets) in Lithuanian. Financial

³²⁹ Brook, *Canberra Times*, 2 Oct. 1964.

difficulties caused the publication to cease after six issues, but Janavičius continued to contribute to the Lithuanian press in both Australia and the USA. He invented a comic character, Umph, and began drawing a comic series which was published in booklet form and also in the literary magazine, *Aspect*, of which Rudy Krauss was editor. Janavičius has contributed to Australian and Lithuanian cultural life in both visual and literary artistic fields.

Painter and art teacher **Vida Kabaila**,³³⁰ *nee* Mikailaitė, paints, she says, 'purely for personal satisfaction.' Her art is representational, rather bold in execution, and with some expressionist features. She prefers strong colours which she applies with definite brushstrokes. She uses landscape and still life as her subject matter, her treatment of the latter influenced by the Oriental art training she received in Japan and the USA. Although she is not a prolific artist, she maintains a steady artistic output and since 1957 has mostly shown her work in group exhibitions. Her first solo exhibition was in 1980, in Chicago.

The only child of professional parents, Vida Kabaila was born on 20 September 1928, in Kelmė in Western Lithuania. Later, the family moved to Kaunas where Vida attended Aušra Girls High School. In 1940, when the Soviets occupied Lithuania, her father, Judge Antanas Mikaila, was arrested and their house and belongings confiscated. Vida and her mother, an opera singer, became dependent upon the compassion of other people for shelter.³³¹

In 1944, the family escaped from Lithuania and after the war settled temporarily in Augsburg Displaced Persons Camp where Vida completed high school studies in 1947 and went on to study art at Vaclovas Ratas's *Studija* art school in Augsburg. Later, while attending the Stuttgart Art Academy, she met and in 1948 married Algis Kabaila, an engineering student. The couple migrated to Australia in 1949 and settled in Melbourne where they raised three children and where Vida Kabaila continued to paint. At the completion of his two-year work contract as a timber-cutter, her husband continued engineering studies, obtaining a master's degree in 1960. In 1961, the family moved to Sydney.³³² From 1965 to 1968 Kabaila taught art at Gladesville High School and Loretto Girls High School in Kirribilli. In 1968, she accompanied her husband to Belgium during his sabbatical leave; this gave her the opportunity to study art in many European galleries and museums. After their return to Australia, she

³³⁰ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 27 Jan. 1988.

³³¹ In 1941, with the Nazi invasion, the Gestapo again searched for her father who was involved in the Underground Resistance movement and had, in 1934, also been one of the judges who had tried Nazi leaders Neumann and Sass, accused of organizing in Klaipėda an attempt to overthrow the Lithuanian government. (*Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 18, p. 397)

³³² In 1967 Algis Kabaila was awarded a PhD from the University of New South Wales where in 1970 he became Associate Professor of Civil Engineering.

studied from 1973 to 1975 at the Julian Ashton Art Studio in Sydney. In 1976 she attended the Shutei Ota Japanese art school in Tokyo, and in 1980 undertook a six-month course on Chinese art at the University of Texas in Houston, USA.

Such varied personal and artistic experiences have given Kabaila a range of divergent influences upon which she draws to achieve personal interpretations of her subjects. Her paintings can be divided into landscapes and still-lives. The mood of her landscapes is determined largely by the presence or absence of the sun. In *Near Seaspray*, 1961 (ill. 121), for example, she depicts a joyous Australian landscape with a brightly coloured sun, rendered in strong, circular brushstrokes, giving movement and cheerfulness to the painting. There are echoes of Van Gogh in her use of colour and in the circular movement, and of Drysdale in the creation of the hot, desert-like atmosphere, but the style is Kabaila's own.

In contrast is *Landscape in Ochre*, 1981 (ill. 122) where a restricted colour palette and spare, horizontal brushstrokes present a landscape without the sun. The still, sombre and bare vista gives a feeling of gloom and devastation. Her still-life paintings, e.g. *Magnolia*, 1985 (ill. 123) show a strong Oriental influence. In a typically asymmetric composition, the blooms are represented in soft colours applied smoothly and tenderly. She says that her Oriental experience reinforced her appreciation of the harmonious relationship between Man and Nature, and she endeavours to convey this in her flower studies.

Vida Kabaila has participated in many exhibitions and, with members of her family, is active in community life. A committee member for ten years of the Sydney Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Association, she was its president for four years. She was also one of the teachers of the Higher School Certificate Lithuanian Language Course introduced in 1978 by the NSW Department of Education.

Leeka Kraucevičius³³³ is a painter and art teacher. The youngest of three children, she was born on 8 February 1939 in Kaunas. Her father, Eugenijus Kraucevičius, a major in the Lithuanian Air Force, was deported to Siberia in 1944, where he later died. Her mother, with two sons and a daughter, successfully reached the West. From the Schleissheim refugee camp, Germany, they migrated to Australia in 1950, and settled in Sydney where Leeka attended a private high school at Summer Hill. She believes that because of language difficulties she performed better in art and mathematics; she was advised to

³³³ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 11 Jan. 1988.

study commerce. She graduated from the Metropolitan Business College in 1955. However, she rebelled against pursuing a business career and enrolled instead at East Sydney Art College, graduating in 1958. For five years she worked as a commercial airbrush artist specialising in photographic reproduction. In 1958 she married George Gruzdeff and they had three children. In 1974, she and her husband separated. She says that at this time art provided consolation for her and she began painting lessons under the private tuition of Ross Davies, Rodney Milgate, Jocelyn Maughan, Allan Hansen and Fred Bates. After gaining her first art prize in 1976 her spirits rose and productivity increased. The Bankstown Art Society invited her to teach art to its members, and later the Blacktown and Epping Art Societies and Roselands Art School offered her teaching positions. In 1978 she won the prestigious Royal Easter Show Prize for her portrait of artist Eva Kubbos. Other prizes followed, giving her moral and material support. 'Art became my way of life', she said.

Kraucevičius's paintings can be divided into three categories: landscapes, portraits and genre paintings. She says that her inspiration comes from Nature and music.

Landscapes: These, in oil or pastel, are representational and executed impressionistically. She portrays the Australian bush in muted colours with smooth brushstrokes, creating a romantic atmosphere, e.g. *Landscape*, 1980 (ill. 124). Her European landscapes are often produced as four-season sequences. For these, she draws upon imagination as well as upon photographs and book illustrations.

Portraits: Kraucevičius's portraits show the artist's greater interest in formal arrangement than in the personalities and character of the sitters. She is apparently not inclined, for whatever reason, to psychological scrutiny, preferring to concentrate on compositional harmony.

Genre paintings: These occupy a special place in her artistic activities. She feels strong fascination for the process of music-making and for musicians at work. She endeavours to capture the varying moods of music by creating pictorial equivalents. *Sonata*, 1981 (ill. 125), for example, shows a quartet of musicians: the artist realistically interprets the slow, serene mood of a classical musical composition, the musicians immersed in their art. The whole picture is executed with impressionistic flair in a monochromatic key of brown. The pastels flow smoothly into stronger or lighter tones to convey classical stability. The figures of the musicians as well as their instruments provide an analogy to the regular rhythm, enhancing the musicality of the visual composition.

A different musical mood is captured in *Concert Pianist*, 1982 (ill. 126), which portrays a fiery, ecstatic scenario, achieved by creating a spinning circle of orange pastel-strokes, the focus a spot-lit pianist. The musicians of the orchestra conform to the general plan of the composition by their places in the circle, with the conductor located in a strategic position. The performers remain anonymous, as the real subject matter of this picture is the rhythm, the tempo and the rondo movement of the music.

As may be expected, Kraucevičius does not attempt to portray modern jazz with gentle, impressionistic brushstrokes; rather she uses broad, staccato movements as in *Jazz Singer*, 1983 (ill. 127). This is an expressionistic pastel painting, the bright, bold colours of which are in constant collision with each other and convey the feeling of fragmented rhythms and vigorous, dynamic performance. Kraucevičius's work is influenced by her favourite artists, Renoir and Bonnard whose painterly abilities and optimistic approach to life she greatly admires.

In 1990, Kraucevičius was made an Associate Member of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales. She was commissioned by the *Australian Artists* magazine to write a series of ten articles, 'Pastel Workshop' which were published in the March 1989 to February 1990 issues.

Danutė Karpavičius³³⁴ is a ceramist whose art is sculptural and decorative. Born on 10 April 1937 in Kaunas to teacher and bookshop owner Povilas and teacher Paulina Doniela, she completed her primary schooling at the Lithuanian school established at the refugee camp in Seedorf, Germany. She arrived in Australia with her parents and brother in 1948. During two-year work contracts her father was employed as a labourer by the Sydney Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board and her mother as a domestic in Sydney. Her brother Vytautas attended the University of Sydney as a philosophy student, later becoming Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Newcastle, and Danutė completed her studies at a private school in Pymble in 1953. Her parents were art-oriented. The family often visited art exhibitions, and the parents were happy with their daughter's decision to enter East Sydney Technical College. There she studied sculpture under Linden Dadswell and Tom Bass. In 1955, she married Jurgis Karpavičius and discontinued art studies while raising their two daughters. Fifteen years later she returned to art, this time to ceramics and for two years attended ceramic classes conducted by Judith Barrett. Karpavičius then studied at West Ryde Technical College under Helen Gulliver who

³³⁴ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 21 Jan. 1988.

recognised her talents and greatly encouraged her work. Her first solo exhibition took place at Sydney Lithuanian House in 1982.

Danutė Karpavičius's art conveys a light, feminine feeling by the use of filigree patterns or frilled finishing touches. The texture of her works is slightly embossed and supple, e.g. *Autumnal Vase*, 1976 (ill. 128). Other functional items such as platters and bowls are usually embellished with playful, irregular patterns or with folk-art motifs which give lightness to otherwise severe, classical forms.

The body of Karpavičius's ceramics consists of static, figurative work. She creates a variety of characters from elegant ladies to unsophisticated peasants as well as elaborate birds and flowers. Sometimes she makes figurines which draw on Lithuania's historical past, as in her series of Lithuanian duchesses. The figurines are constructed of cylindrical units and their decoration is more severe than that of other figurines and consists of simple incisions of geometric patterns reminiscent of Lithuanian national costumes. An example is *The Duchess Ugnė*, 1982 (ill. 129).

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS : YOUNG ARRIVALS

During the late sixties second-generation Lithuanian artists began to graduate from art-training institutions in Australia and to exhibit their work. In Sydney, the group comprises three women artists, all of whom use their maiden names in the art world. Born between 1944 and 1949 to refugee parents in Germany or Austria, they received their entire education in Australia. Their artistic work has been influenced by contemporary art movements and by their home environments. At the time they appeared on the Sydney art scene, subjective abstract expressionism was giving way to more objective and cooler abstract art such as colour painting, colour-field painting and hard-edge.

Painter **Nina Meškėnas**³³⁵ showed artistic talent very early in life and was given strong encouragement by her parents. The eldest of three children, she was born in Vienna on 8 November 1944. At the time her father, painter Vladas Meškėnas and mother Danutė, a nursing sister, were political refugees fleeing from the Germans. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia where they settled in the Sydney suburb of Bankstown. Even though there was little money and they lived in crowded conditions, their life was filled with aesthetic appreciation. Nina grew up with a love of art books and art reproductions, as

³³⁵ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 4 Jan. 1988.

well as being exposed to her father's creative talent, having frequent discussions concerning art and regularly visiting art exhibitions. She remembers that during her school days her favourite artists were Van Gogh and, naturally enough, her father. After completing her studies at Wiley Park Girls High School, she enrolled in 1962 at East Sydney Technical College to study art. She was a successful student, and in 1967, her final year, entered the prestigious Sulman Art Competition held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in conjunction with the Archibald Competition. She received warm and encouraging critiques by Wallace Thornton in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Elwyn Lynn in the *Bulletin*. After graduating, she married Jurgis Kalakauskas, an engineer, and they have three children.

Nina Meškėnas's painting is expressionistic and figurative and has tight yet vigorous composition. She uses strong colours with assured brushstrokes and generally depicts women: in landscapes, interiors and as nudes. Her subjects, however, are treated as part of the pictorial composition rather than as individuals with a principal role. Meškėnas prefers to work in oils and generally signs her work with the single word, Nina.

During the sixties, her paintings were influenced by expressionism and cubism: she used large volumes of colour with pronounced and balanced rhythm. In her work of this period, she treats her favourite subject matter -- women -- and the pictorial space as vertical and horizontal compositional elements rather than as specific objects. Her use of colour is generally subdued, as in *On the Beach*, 1967 (ill. 130), but occasionally bursts into vivid vibrancy with forms divided into smaller facets, in the manner of Delaunay's orphic cubism, as in *Flying Women*, 1968 (ill. 131). Here she uses flat colours applied with strength and confidence.

In the seventies she experimented with expressionism. Her paintings of this period are characterised by changes in composition -- generally a female figure is placed prominently in the foreground. In contrast to her father who psychologically analyses the sitter's personality, Nina treats the figure from a formal point of view. She uses strong colours and thick impasto applied with emotion and determination, as in *Woman with Mirror*, 1978 (ill. 132).

In the eighties, her colours became softer and more lyrical and her composition more restrained. Her creative output has diminished in recent years because of having to care for her sick husband and their three children.

Painter and teacher Nijolė Bižys³³⁶ bases her work entirely on Lithuanian folk-art motifs. She was born on 22 October 1944 in Dresden, Germany, to

³³⁶ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 5 Jan. 1988.

refugees Danutė and Viktoras Bižys; her father was a former Lithuanian army officer. In 1949, the family migrated to Australia and settled in the Sydney suburb of Glebe.

The parents' devotion to work and study made a strong impression on their three children.³³⁷ In 1961, Bižys completed secondary studies at St. Mary Star of the Sea High School in Hurstville, and in 1964 graduated from Sydney Teachers College. She took up a full-time teaching career in primary and, later, secondary schools, at the same time studying at Kogarah Technical College from which she gained a Diploma of Art Education in 1969. In 1984 she gained a Bachelor of Art Education degree from the Sydney Art Institute. In 1990 she completed her Master of Education thesis, 'The Attitudes of Four Generations of Lithuanians towards Education', at the University of Sydney and then travelled to newly independent Lithuania to teach English.

From 1970 to 1974 Bižys lived in England and Europe where she studied the artistic aspects of cinematography and visited many art galleries. During this time she supported herself by teaching English in schools. Although she gained her first award for painting while still a student,³³⁸ she says that the strongest motivation for her to continue painting came in 1974 when she learned that her father was suffering from a terminal illness. Until that time, she had completed works of art only as part of her art studies, but for her father's birthday she painted a Lithuanian scene as he had described his homeland. Her father's enthusiastic response encouraged her to continue painting Lithuanian motifs and subject matter. Bižys' work is probably best described as primitive art with lyric traits based on ethnic symbols which are taken not only from visual folk art but also extensively from the songs and tales of folklore. Her art is decorative and two-dimensional with the colour applied in flat, rather sombre, hues. She enjoys working in series, whether of few or many parts.

In her series work, she takes particular subjects and by varying composition, colour and symbols from one painting to another, develops a common theme. Examples are her 'Lovers', 'Sisters' and 'Girls' series. In *Lovers and the Earth*, 1980, the landscape and figures predominate; in each of the other paintings in the same series a particular symbol is the dominant feature, with the subjects less prominent. In *Lovers with Flowers*, 1980 (ill. 134), the principal object is an ornamentation used in the decoration of Lithuanian glory boxes and symbolising the Tree of Life.

³³⁷ At the completion of his two-year work contract as a road-worker, Viktoras Bižys was employed as a hotel cleaner and five years later had become the hotel manager. His wife ran a milk bar, studied English at night, later enrolling at night school to study Economics and eventually, in 1981, gaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Psychology from the University of Sydney.

³³⁸ At the 1969 St. George District Art Competition.

In another series, symbols used are extensions of her subjects' activities, as in *Lithuanian Women with Motifs*, 1984 (ill. 135). In this tightly structured composition, she uses the image of a fern, symbolising unattainable wisdom, with the motif of the distaff, representing the spinning of life's yarn.

Although the composition of her work shows the strong influence of Mark Chagall and her mode of representation is reminiscent of Henri Rousseau, Bižys displays a degree of individuality. Her paintings reflect a woman's world: they are perceptually complex but of simple composition and embellished with feminine detail. There is a strong sense of human warmth and a naive feeling of happiness and expectation. Her use of Lithuanian folk art motifs imbues her paintings with richly symbolic meaning.

Dianne Keraitis,³³⁹ b.1947, is a painter and art teacher. In 1949 her family migrated to Australia and Keraitis remembers that they were still living in a tent when she was enrolled at Panania Primary School in Sydney's western suburbs. She remembers, too, her parents' association at that time with a number of Lithuanian artists. She had many opportunities as a young child to observe painters Vladas Meškėnas and Leonas Urbonas and wood-carver Jurgis Reisgys at work. Later, Henry Šalkauskas's abstract paintings had a strong impression on her.

In 1963 Keraitis completed her secondary education at East Hills Girls High School and the following year enrolled at St George Technical College to study art. At this time, she says, an inferiority complex which she had developed during her high school years, caused her to change her first name from Danguolė to Dianne. She believes that with her name change came greater acceptance by her peers. After two years general art study she entered the National Art School in Sydney where she concentrated on painting, graduating in 1968 with a Diploma of Painting and Drawing. For the next three years she taught art at a number of NSW high schools, and then travelled to London where she studied Lithography for six months at the Chelsea Art School.

After this she visited museums and art galleries in Lithuania and Russia as well as in a number of European countries. In France she admired particularly the work of the Impressionist painters and their techniques of colour application. The pristine palette of Bonnard inspired her, but she feels that her own work should portray an individual perception of form and colour. In Lithuania she was impressed by modern trends in ceramics and especially in interior decoration. She says that in Moscow she was astonished to see

³³⁹Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 6 Feb. 1988. Other information supplied in letters from the artist.

hundreds of student portraits and sculptures of Lenin and to learn that this was the only theme by which the students were assessed.

Returning to Australia in 1973 she taught art at the National Art School on a part-time basis, in order to have free time for painting. In 1974, she married graphic designer Brian West and over the next few years raised two children, at the same time attending ceramics courses at Randwick Technical College and Waverley-Woolahra ArtsCentre. In 1982 she returned to the City Art Institute, gaining a Diploma in Professional Art Studies in 1984 and a Diploma of Education from the Sydney Institute of Education in 1985.

Keraitis's paintings can be divided into two groups: abstract paintings, executed in the seventies, and semi-abstract paintings of the eighties.

Abstract Paintings: Her works of the seventies, in oil and acrylic, are investigations into formal arrangement and the juxtaposition of static and kinetic principles; they are endowed with emotional content varying from the lyric to the ebullient. *Study in Blue*, 1976 (ill. 136), is a poetic statement in its configuration and juxtaposition of coloured squares and circles. She superimposes six translucent coloured rectangles and interrupts their static arrangement by a burst of floating blue bubbles. One can feel a relationship with the work of Malevich, Mondrian and Alberts but without their suprematist or theosophical symbolism.

Semi-abstract Paintings: In the eighties she began to introduce representational elements, at first with only the suggestion of discernible objects. An example is *Spring*, 1983 (ill. 137), in which she demonstrates more the abstract power of Spring or of a flower opening than the image of the flower itself; however, there is a suggestion of an image. In her landscapes, she relates the representational elements much more closely to visible reality. Keraitis writes: 'None of my landscapes is painted directly from nature, but through recollections of familiar places, so that recognisable images may not necessarily be accurate, but as recalled through my eyes.'

In some paintings such as *Clearing*, 1984 (ill. 138), the artist combines her earlier abstract and formal styles with vigorous, staccato-like, vertical brushstrokes in the representation of the forest. In others, e.g. *The Wind*, 1984 (ill. 139), aspects of observable reality are more readily identifiable, although at the same time they represent the abstract power of the elements.

Keraitis has participated in a number of Lithuanian and other group exhibitions. In 1970 she was awarded first prize in the Currabubula Art Competition; in 1984 she gained first prize in the prestigious Robin Hood Art Competition.

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS: AUSTRALIAN-BORN

Although the Sydney Lithuanian community is the largest in Australia it has produced only five Australian-born artists. Two, Peter Rimas Kabaila and Ugnė Vincenta Kazokas, are talented enthusiasts who have not had formal art training. With the exception of Josonia Palaitis, the women in this group are currently committed to rearing families and have postponed artistic activity.

These artists work separately and there is little or no contact among members of the group. Nor do they show interest in organizational matters within the Lithuanian community, and only if requested by members of the older generation do they participate in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions. The group comprises Josonia Palaitis, Ugnė Vincenta Kazokas, Peter Rimas Kabaila, Jonas Abromas and Audronė Jurkšaitis.

Josonia Palaitis,³⁴⁰ painter and part-time teacher, is an 'adopted Lithuanian'. Born Josephine Mills to Australian parents in Sydney on 28 June 1949, she married a Lithuanian surveyor, Eduardas Palaitis, in 1973. She writes: 'Since my marriage ... I have learned much about Lithuania and the Lithuanian people and have come to feel a deep sense of belonging to the Lithuanian community in Australia ... I love my husband's Lithuanian heritage ... and feel privileged to be embraced by the Lithuanian community in Australia. It is with great pride that I use my Lithuanian name at all times in my professional career as an artist.'

The youngest of three children, Palaitis was born into an artistic family: her parents, John and Patricia Mills, were graphic artists and magazine illustrators. At sixteen, after gaining a scholarship, she enrolled at the University of Sydney where she studied Archaeology, English, French and Indonesian. She remained for two years but says that she 'never felt comfortable', and in 1968 decided to study art. She enrolled at National Art School classes at Seaforth Technical College in New South Wales and in 1969, again with a scholarship, studied art at the National Art School, formerly known as East Sydney Technical College. In 1972 she received a Diploma of Art Education from the Alexander Mackie Teachers College in Sydney. In 1983 she enrolled for a three-year course to learn Lithuanian at the Saturday School for Community Languages at Ashfield, and became fluent in reading, writing and speaking. In 1984 she began art study at the City Art Institute in Sydney and gained a Bachelor of Art degree.

She has spent time overseas: from 1973 to 1975 she lived in Papua-New Guinea; in 1981, she was commissioned by the Magnetic Island Historic

³⁴⁰ Bio/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 16 Feb. 1988 and from a letter (undated) to the author.

Society to undertake a painting trip to the island; in the following year she made a similar trip to Lord Howe Island, sponsored by that island's Historic Society; and in 1984 she visited art galleries and museums in Europe. As well as caring for two young sons and being a part-time teacher, Palaitis is a prolific artist. She works in a variety of media including lithography but mainly in oil and watercolour. Her output ranges from landscapes and portraits to genre paintings.

In the seventies and early eighties she preferred to work in photo-realistic style. Her Papua-New Guinean landscapes and portraits, mainly of natives, belong to this period; so, too, do other works such as *John Howard*, 1980 and *Adrian Dangerfield*, 1981. Her portrait of John Howard, at that time Australian Federal Treasurer, was selected for the Archibald Prize Exhibition in 1980; in 1981 her genre painting, *80th Birthday Party* was shown at the Sulman Exhibition, held concurrently with the Archibald Exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In her *Self Portrait*, 1983 (ill. 140), she introduces expressionistic brush-strokes, especially in rendering the background and in dramatising herself by adding harsh, bold features uncharacteristic of her personality.

Probably the greatest change in her style occurred in her landscape paintings of the eighties. On a 1981 trip to Magnetic Island she became, she says, consciously aware for the first time of the grand elements of Nature. This experience is recalled in her own words: 'I was alone and confronted by all these elements, an inescapable horizon and the perpetual presence of all those huge granite boulders. It was a religious experience ... not necessarily Christian.'³⁴¹

Magnetic Island Enchantment, 1981 (ill. 141), in spite of its pronounced formal arrangement, is an emotional picture projecting the artist's admiration of the order and harmony she sees in Nature. The sparseness of objects and their composition are her way of showing the timeless order and the primeval state of the natural world. This effect is enhanced by the strong definition of shapes and bold flat colour application.

Even more awe-inspiring is her painting, *Life Energy*, 1981 (ill. 142), which is a salute to life and a celebration of vitality. The harmonious interaction between animate and inanimate elements is a major concept unifying her pictorial interpretations. Such paintings help one understand her reasons for saying, 'I become part of the environment.'

Her paintings of domestic environments, however, produce another kind of work and unfold another facet of the artist's personality. In *Steps Behind the Flowers*, 1985 (ill. 143), she displays the playfulness of light and

³⁴¹ 'The Arts', *North Shore Times*, Sydney, 15 Oct. 1981.

shade, of vibration and stillness, of instability and permanence. Here. Palaitis employs a multiplicity of objects, brushstroke directions and colours to achieve an atmosphere of festivity, in the manner of the Impressionists.

Palaitis has received several art awards and commissions: these include, in 1981, the Goulburn City Art Award and Magnetic Island Painting Commission; in 1982, the Lord Howe Island Painting Commission. When, in 1985, the Lithuanian Art and Craft Association was founded in Sydney, she was one of the first and most enthusiastic members. Her participation in the association's exhibitions has done much to strengthen the meagre ranks of second-generation Lithuanian artists.

Ugnė Vincenta Kazokas,³⁴² painter, illustrator, photographer and teacher, displayed artistic ability from a very early age: at three she already painted 'abstracts' and modelled fantastic structures from plasticine. At home her artistic activities were encouraged. In 1964 she won first prize for her musical composition in Lithuanian Youth Days, held in Sydney. She has participated in many local Australian art competitions, collecting a string of minor prizes. In 1965, she was awarded first prize in the Junior section of an art exhibition organized by the Australian Business Association in Bankstown. In 1970, she won third prize in the Lithuanian Days junior art exhibition in Melbourne.

The elder of two children, Kazokas was born in Sydney on 6 October 1951. Her father Vincas Kazokas, a journalist and editor of the weekly Lithuanian paper *Mūsų Pastogė* and her mother Genovaitė appreciated visual and musical art. She was taken to concerts, opera and art exhibitions from early childhood. She found art lessons at Bankstown Girls High School uninspiring and resisted the copying and colouring-in practices, but excelled in sports and was a school champion in swimming, diving, running and skiing. She was greatly encouraged by her sports teachers and peers. As her parents did not favour what they saw as excessive sports activities, she financed her sports equipment and travel by selling her paintings.

In 1969 she completed studies at Bankstown Girls High School and enrolled at the Westmead Teachers College from which she graduated in 1972. For a year she taught intellectually handicapped children in Parramatta district schools. In 1973 she travelled to England, France, Lithuania, Austria and Germany, supporting herself by working in travel agencies and as a ski instructor. In 1982 she returned to Australia, married and established her own travel agency.

³⁴² The artist is the author's daughter.

Kazokas's paintings are spontaneous and expressionistic and possess a sense of composition and balanced colour distribution. She paints mainly abstracts in acrylic or gouache. Her colours are usually vivid and jubilant. In most cases, colour is the principal element: a movement, a whirl or a sweep evolves from the handling of the brush or the merging of colours, e.g. *Abstract*, 1965 (ill. 144). In other paintings, constructional elements, rhythm and repetition predominate, as in *Black and Gold*, 1970 (ill. 145). She experiments also with controlled accidents and endeavours to say more with less, e.g. *Black and Red*, 1972 (ill. 146). Here the balanced shapes float slowly in pictorial space, their impact enhanced by a single patch of red colour.

In 1968 she illustrated two children's books by Ava Saudargas: *Buvro broliai devyni* (There were Nine Brothers) and *Teismas eina* (The Court is in Session). Her illustrations are spontaneous and figurative and faithfully depict the characters of the text. In the eighties she concentrated on artistic photography, searching for faces of suffering Asian women and situations highlighting women's issues. She participates in Lithuanian art exhibitions. However, family commitments -- raising two daughters -- have temporarily halted her artistic activities.

Peter Rimas Kabaila³⁴³ is an architect who practises many art forms. He was born in Melbourne on 9 August, 1955. The family moved to Sydney in 1961 and he attended St. Aloysius College, conducted by the Jesuits. He grew up in an artistic and hard-working family: his mother, Vida Kabaila, is a painter who studied and practised art while raising her three children; his father, Algis Kabaila, began life in Australia as a timber-cutter and later became Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of New South Wales.³⁴⁴

Kabaila's first active foray into art was the production of hundreds of stone and brass rubbings on his visits to cathedrals in Belgium in 1968 during his father's sabbatical leave. On return to Sydney, Kabaila expressed a wish to study art. As St. Aloysius College did not offer art classes, he attended lessons at Kirribilli Girls High School. During these years he also undertook, at various times, external courses in photography, wood and lino-cutting, precious metal-smithing, pottery, silkscreen printing, stained-glass making, soapstone-carving and gemstone-cutting. As well, he painted sets for school theatrical productions, the largest complete scene being a landscape for Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, painted on a single canvas roll fourteen metres in length. After completing his secondary education in 1973, he enrolled at the

³⁴³ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 18 Feb. 1988.

³⁴⁴ In 1991 Prof. Algis Kabaila was appointed Honorary Consul of the Lithuanian Republic, resident in Canberra.

University of New South Wales to study Science and Architecture. In 1977 he gained a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture (B.Sc.Arch.). He went on to further studies in Architecture, and in 1980 he and his wife, formerly Amanda Gaut, were awarded Bachelor of Architecture degrees. For his Honours degree, Kabaila presented a thesis, 'Traditional Lithuanian Architecture', for which he was awarded First Prize in 1982 by the Australian-Lithuanian Foundation.³⁴⁵

Kabaila's favourite art forms are soap-stone carving, silkscreen printing and photography. He is fascinated by Lithuanian mythology and folklore and finds new ways of interpreting these, e.g. *Calendar*, 1980 (ill. 147). The whole surface of this silkscreen which portrays a tree is divided into twelve equal squares, each representing a month of the year. Of special interest in the artist's semantic world are the names of the months. Some denote general conditions; others the arrival of the birds and the flowering of the trees; and three describe agricultural work.³⁴⁶ Other of Kabaila's silkscreen prints represent simple landscapes of Lithuania, e.g. *Cover of the Catalogue*, 1984 (ill. 148).

Kabaila has received a number of awards for his art work: in 1971 he won second prize for stone sculpture at the Greenwich Gemstone Exhibition; in 1972, he gained the second award for sculpture in the Young Artists' section of the Lithuanian Art Exhibition held during Lithuanian Days in Sydney. In 1976 he was awarded first prize for his black and white photography at the Architecture Students' Exhibition of Photography at the State Bank Building in Martin Place, Sydney.

Kabaila regards travelling as valuable educational experience and, since his student days, has worked at various jobs, both before and during travel, that have enabled him to visit other places. These include a number of South Pacific countries as well as Asia, Great Britain, Lithuania and the Soviet Union. Recently, Kabaila and his wife settled with their two young daughters in Canberra where they now work as architects. Peter Rimas Kabaila participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions and is active in the Lithuanian Scouts organization.

Jonas Abromas³⁴⁷ is a painter who began to draw even before he could talk. The eldest of the four children of Jonas and Elizabeth Abromas, he was born in

³⁴⁵ The prize is awarded annually for an academic work on a Lithuanian theme produced by persons living in Australia.

³⁴⁶ Sausis (January) 'falling of dry snow'; vasaris (February) 'blowing of the softer winds'; kovas (March) 'arrival of the rook'; balandis (April) 'arrival of the pigeon'; gegužis (May) 'arrival of cuckoo'; birželis (June) 'flowering of the birch'; liepa (July) 'flowering of the linden'; rugpjūtis (August) 'harvesting of the rye'; spalio (October) 'breaking the flax'; lapkritis (November) 'falling of the leaves'; gruodis (December) 'freezing of the ground'.

³⁴⁷ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 12 Jan. 1988.

Sydney on 23 May 1959. His father is a gregarious person, an energetic member of the Sydney Lithuanian community. In contrast, Jonas Abromas is reserved and uncommunicative, preferring always to remain in his own fantasy world.

His best subjects at De La Salle Brothers High School were Art and English, but he recalls that his artistic talents were ignored by his teachers. The only encouragement he received was from his father who was his only confidant. In 1976, he enrolled at the National Art School, majoring in sculpture and graduating in 1979. For the next year he worked as a house painter and then, encouraged by his father, became a freelance artist. His interest focused on painting, and he found his way of communicating with the world.

Although born in the city, Abromas is more at ease in rural surroundings and takes his inspiration from Nature which he regards as animated and enchanted. His view of the world is pantheistic and with strong Freudian overtones. He works mostly from photographs taken during his outings, and although his paintings are representational and themes are taken from the visual surroundings, the mode of representation is related to the surrealists without having the eerie, hallucinatory effects of artists such as de Chirico.

Abromas's work is influenced by the ideas of Dali as well as by the imagery of Delvaux and Magritte, yet he has discovered his own anthropomorphic way of interpreting Nature. Using somewhat romantic, lyrical and inviting imagery, he manipulates objects so that they function on both real and surreal levels: trees are given human limbs, hills and rocks are portrayed as parts of the female body. In this way, he changes realistic landscapes into what he calls 'landscapes of the mind'.

His paintings, both oil and acrylic, have formal composition and are rendered realistically in regard to perspective and colour. An atmosphere of mystery is conveyed in some of his paintings such as *Lunar Body*, 1981 (ill. 149). Here he represents an imaginary lunar landscape in which he depicts only a few objects within a restricted colour range. Mystery is achieved mainly by his control of tone, by the fluid black and grey nuances and by the subtle sculptural metamorphosis of the hills into a female nude.

Most of his paintings however, are inspired by the sunlit Australian landscape and are rendered in bright, local colours. An example is *Land of Desire*, 1982 (ill. 150), in which the artist endows the scene with a pantheistic spirit and changes the familiar into the unexpected. Human forms merge with natural objects or sometimes appear as if from the entrails of the earth -- from a chthonic world, searching for sun and light. *Wine, Women and Song*, 1985

(ill. 151) is Abromas's pictorial paraphrase of the well-known idiom. Here, the rocks assume female forms and the most unusual feature is the juxtaposition of incongruous objects, wine bottle, wine glass and candle holder, in the foreground of the picture. In this way, Abromas transforms an ordinary Australian landscape into an animated, sensual and surrealist scene.

Since 1980, Abromas has participated regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions as well as in exhibitions at the Sydney Royal Easter Show and those conducted by local art groups. His first solo show was held at Lithuanian House in Bankstown in 1983.

Ceramist **Audronė Jurkšaitis**³⁴⁸ was born, the second of five children, to Nijolė and Kastytis Stašionis in Sydney on 19 July 1962. She grew up in an artistic environment: her mother had studied art at East Sydney Technical College and her grandparents, who lived nearby, were actively engaged in Sydney's Lithuanian cultural life. From an early age, she showed artistic talent and received encouragement from parents and grandparents, especially from her grandfather, a former lawyer. She later dedicated to her grandfather her ceramic, *The First Leaf*, 1983 (ill. 152), which was featured in the 1984 Autumn edition of *Craft Australia* following an exhibition by graduate students of her college.

She matriculated from Nazareth Girls High School in Bankstown, Sydney in 1979 and the following year enrolled at the Sydney College of Fine Arts where she studied photography, silkscreen printing, glassmaking and ceramics. In 1983 she was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts, and in 1987 married Raimondas Jurkšaitis.

Most of her work is in ceramics and reflects the influence of Mitsuo Skoji, a Japanese teacher under whom she studied, and whose work emphasises the notion of reduction. Her non-functional, miniature sculptural ceramics have a simple, distinctive form endowed with movement and a sense of spirituality. She achieves simplicity through reduction and selection of cardinal elements and says that her aim is to explore the unknown forces of Nature. She says she strives to capture the mystery of life force in the unfolding and maturing of plants and flowers. *The First Leaf*, 1983, is a vase in which the movement extends harmoniously from base to top, enfolding into the leaf to suggest the great mystery of Nature. The purity and tranquillity of the sculpture is achieved by the merging of clear, classical lines, slow rhythm and faint pastel green tint.

³⁴⁸ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 12 Jan. 1988.

The same notion is embodied in another ceramic sculpture, *Study in Growth*, 1984 (ill. 153). Here, the gentle force of life energy is exerted vertically from the base to the opening of the flower bud.

Lithuanian legends also find a place in her work, e.g. *Eglė, the Queen of the Serpents*, 1984 (ill. 154). In this popular legend, Eglė, the wife of the Serpent, is betrayed by her daughter and turns all her children into trees; Eglė herself becomes a fir tree. After so many representations of the legend, Jurkšaitis's approach is refreshing. She combines the two elements -- the body of the serpent and the crown of the queen -- in a single, vital entity, part animal and part floral. Although Jurkšaitis's sculptural ceramics are subtle and fragile in appearance, they are strong statements on the mysterious forces of Nature. She achieves purity through economy of form, texture and colour, a reflection of her training in Japanese ceramics.

LATECOMERS TO ART

By the late seventies, many first-generation Lithuanian refugees were no longer able to continue actively in the community. Lithuanian House in Bankstown, acquired with great difficulty in earlier years, now became little used. Cultural activities lessened and visual art exhibitions were no longer regularly held. Bistrickas, the most enthusiastic of the early organizers, had left Australia in 1962; Algirdas Šimkūnas had died in 1971, Vaclovas Ratas in 1973 and Henry Šalkauskas in 1979. The remaining artists of the Vanguard Group -- Mikševičius, Kubbos, Meškėnas and Urbonas -- had become immersed in their own work and were generally working in isolation.

Delayed Group artists were often still busy rearing families; Second-Generation artists were pre-occupied within their own circles. It seemed that no artists were interested in organizing art exhibitions in the years between the regular Lithuanian Days festivals which occurred in Sydney only once every six years. To fill these long cultural gaps, occasional art exhibitions were arranged by Genovaitė Kazokas. In 1985 she founded the Lithuanian Art and Craft Association and became its first president. The association's primary objective was to organize at least one exhibition per year, preferably on some national occasion so that a wider audience would be reached. The secondary goal was to initiate communication and interaction among artists. The response from artists of both the first and second generations was surprisingly favourable, and it seemed as if many had been waiting for someone to provide just such an opportunity.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ 'Artists have to be organized, they won't organize themselves', Leonas Urbonas commented to the author on several occasions.

The association embarked upon a range of activities, the success of which depended largely on the support of a number of people who had come to art late in their lives. It is convenient to group these under the heading, Latecomers to Art. Each has received at least some art training in Australia, sometimes after retirement from regular employment, and a number have graduated from art institutions. Their work generally reflects the styles of their particular training schools -- cubism, orphism,³⁵⁰ abstract art -- but several express their individuality using traditional ethnic or fantasy components. Their contribution to the Sydney Lithuanian community has been significant, especially as they appeared at a time when artistic activities were at a low point.

Oldest among the Sydney Latecomers group is Jurgis Reisgys,³⁵¹ a former school teacher. Four generations of his ancestors had been skilled carpenters and village engineers able to construct large, functional windmills from small, carved models. Reigys was first attracted to sculpture in the early thirties at the Teachers College in Tauragė³⁵² when he assisted his art teacher Robertas Antinis (1898-1981), a graduate of a Paris art school, to work on a large clay model for the *Darius and Girėnas Memorial* monument.

Reisgys was born on 11 May 1914, in Jurgiai village in the Dovilai district of the territory of Klaipėda which at that time was in German hands.³⁵³ He grew up in a family of six children and attended German primary school in Stučiai village where the Lithuanian language was not tolerated, although all residents except the teacher in ordinary life spoke Lithuanian. He graduated from Klaipėda High School in 1932, and from Tauragė Teachers College in 1935, after which he taught in various schools in Lithuania.

The ensuing foreign occupations of the country brought great tragedy to Reisgys family: his mother and two brothers were deported to Siberia where his mother later died; his father, a prominent leader of various Lithuanian organizations, was arrested by the Nazis in 1940 and tortured to death in the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.³⁵⁴ In 1944, with the return to Lithuania of the Soviets, Jurgis Reigys joined the refugees fleeing to safety.

At the end of World War II, he found himself in a refugee camp in Eichstatt in Southern Bavaria. Here there were about 800 Lithuanians who

³⁵⁰Orphism is an art form which developed from cubism (1910-1914). In contrast to the monochromatic nature of cubism, orphism employs a wide range of colour.

³⁵¹ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 2 Jan. 1988.

³⁵²Tauragė is a town in Western Lithuania.

³⁵³ The territory of Klaipėda was returned to Lithuania in 1923 and occupied again by the Nazis in 1939.

³⁵⁴ Martynas Reigys (1886-1942) was a foundation member of the Lithuanian Youth Organization, a member of the Santara Organization and was also involved in the 1923 insurrection which resulted in the return of Klaipėda to Lithuania. (In *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 25, p. 81)

established, among other organizations, a high school in which Reisgys became a teacher. He married another teacher, Teresė Daukutė, and they moved to Erlangen, where he studied Geography and Geology at the University for three years.

In 1949 the Reisgys family migrated to Australia and settled in Bankstown where they raised three children. Both parents were employed by the Railways Department as shift-work cleaners, Jurgis Reisgys remaining in the same work for almost thirty years until his retirement in 1979. During that time he and his wife were active in organizing the Lithuanian Weekend School in Bankstown and worked there as teachers, were members of local and national community councils, served on many committees, were active in the Lithuanian Scouts organization and contributed to the Lithuanian press.

Reisgys' fascination with sculpture returned and, as a hobby, he began to carve walking sticks and, later, abstract entities whose forms were determined largely by the shapes of the tree branches with which he worked. In 1971 he enrolled at Parramatta Technical College to study ceramics but, two years later, returned to his favourite medium, wood, because, he says, 'it has scent, breath and warmth, because it is living.' Following his retirement from work in 1979, he enrolled at the Sculpture Centre at The Rocks in Sydney. He became a member of the Sydney Sculptors Society and has participated in its exhibitions, seminars and workshops as well as contributing to the *Sculptors' Bulletin*.

Reisgys' subject matter is varied. It includes images from the old pagan religion, e.g. *Old Prussian Grave Mark*, 1985 (ill. 155).³⁵⁵ This is a traditional structure representing a pagan memorial. Early tribes believed that in the first three days after death the soul, released from the body, had to rest before the flight to 'dausos' (Paradise), and this structure provided a refuge. It also served as a haven for the soul's later visits to earth, especially in autumn during the commemoration of the dead, now called All Saints Day. Reisgys has constructed this work according to traditional requirements: with a strong roof and a reference to the sex of the deceased (in this case an acorn indicating a male).

In some of his larger-scale works, Reisgys expresses the vitality of the forces of Nature in forms such as an unfolding flower or a flower bud. Such works are rendered in bold, stylized manner with the natural texture of the wood exposed and coated only with preserving oil. Two examples are *Flower of the Forest*, 1984 (ill. 156) and *Flowers of the Mountains*, 1985 (ill. 157). He experiments also with abstract forms, as in *Equipoise*, 1985 (ill. 158). Here

³⁵⁵ This refers to the Baltic Prussian inhabitants, closely related to Lithuanians, whose state was annihilated by the Germans in the 13th century but the remnants of the old Baltic Prussians, by then a small number, preserved their customs well into the 20th century.

Reisgys exploits natural irregularities in wood and creates more intricate shapes with vigorous movement. Added interest is gained by the interplay of space and solid volumes. As with his other small-scale works, this has a smooth, highly polished finish.

Painter Stasys Montvidas³⁵⁶ was born, the eldest son in a family of seven children, on 17 November 1918, in Šilėlis village in the Rokiškis county of Lithuania. His father was a railway worker and after moving from place to place, the family eventually settled in Šiauliai where Montvidas began high school in 1931. His art teacher was Česlovas Janušas, b.1907, a realist painter, noted for his tonal seascapes. Janušas encouraged the young student to draw and paint and, after school, gave free art lessons to him and several other talented students. In his sixth year of high school, Montvidas's mother fell ill and he had to take a job as a clerk and continue his studies by correspondence.

In 1944, he was press-ganged by the Nazis and taken to Germany to do enforced labour. After the war he found himself in the Bamberg refugee camp in Northern Bavaria. He joined the Lithuanian theatre group in the camp and acted as its stage decorator. At the same time he studied painting under realist landscape painter, Bandmeyer. In 1946 he became an illustrator for the Lithuanian paper, *Tėviškės garsas* (Homeland Echo) and also studied painting under Frau Gruber.

Montvidas migrated to Australia in 1950 and for the next two years worked at a brickworks at Port Kembla. At the conclusion of his work contract and after briefly trying several other jobs, he took a position with the NSW Transport Department. In 1961, he was transferred to Sydney where in 1963 he enrolled as a part-time student at the National Art School. He graduated in 1969. One of his teachers, John Santry, was very sympathetic towards him and encouraged him to experiment and explore artistically in order to discover the style most appropriate for him.

In 1970, Montvidas married Angelė Sodeikaitė. Since retiring in 1983 he has devoted his time to art and has participated in Lithuanian Art Exhibitions within the Sydney Community.

Montvidas's art is a combination of several styles, including realist and cubist, often with symbolic connotations. In *Obvention ad Finem*, 1978 (ill. 159), the artist depicts the ruins of a church in semi-abstract, decorative manner using large, jagged planes of flat colour. His pronounced vertical composition and use of bright palette present the dramatic situation in a remote, fairy-like setting and have strong folk-art references. The man-made elements -- the

³⁵⁶ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 8 Feb. 1988.

church ruins and the torn flag-- exhibit evidence of the same fate suffered by the natural elements such as the split fir tree.

In *Sunset*, 1984 (ill. 160), Montvidas returns to his favourite realist style and shows the strong influence of his first teacher, Janušas. This is a tonal oil painting, a classical composition that utilises repeated horizontality and is permeated with nostalgia.

Painter Ignas Bieliūnas,³⁵⁷ was born in Kaunas on 29 March 1923, the second son of Ignas and Regina Bieliūnas. His father, a senior public servant, sent his sons to the Marija Pečkauskaitė High School. There, art teacher Vytautas Bičiūnas (1893-1945), a realist painter and author, recognised Bieliūnas's talent and involved him in the school's artistic activities, among them poster painting and stage decoration. A special bond developed between teacher and student. Bieliūnas was in his final high school year when the Soviets occupied Lithuania. During his final examinations, news of a mass deportation reached the students. Bieliūnas did not return home but spent the nights hiding with his brother in city parks. His mother was deported to Siberia where she later died; his father was taken prisoner. A week later, at the outbreak of war, a bus laden with male prisoners, including Bieliūnas's father, broke down near Utena. All the prisoners were shot dead; their perforated skulls were found by the roadside after the war. The teacher Bičiūnas was deported to Siberia and forced to work in below zero winter temperatures in the coal mines at Vorkuta; he died there some time later.

In 1942 Ignas Bieliūnas was captured by the Nazis and taken, along with other young Lithuanian men, to Paris to undergo German military training. Bieliūnas, who spoke some French, came into contact with members of the French Underground Movement and joined them. After the war, he travelled to Germany and in 1947 married Birutė Stanišauskaitė in the refugee camp at Augsburg.

In 1949 they migrated to Australia where Bieliūnas carried out a two-year work contract as a sugarcane cutter in Queensland while his wife worked in a NSW mental institution at Rydelmere. In 1951 he joined his wife in Sydney and tried many jobs, eventually working for ten years at a garage. During this time, he studied Accountancy part-time at Sydney Technical College and graduated in 1961. In 1965 he began work as an accountant at the Ministry of Transport where he remained until his retirement in 1983.

In the early sixties his artistic aspirations began to re-surface and in 1963 he enrolled to study painting at Ashfield Evening College. When, two

³⁵⁷ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 8 Jan. 1988.

years later, the course was discontinued, Bieliūnas carried on painting at home for his own pleasure, and many years later, in the early eighties, studied privately under Raimund de Cusa and Desmond Connor.

He says that for him art is a relaxation and an escape from psychological pressure. His favourite artists are Picasso and Braque, to whom he owes his basic attitudes to art. Bieliūnas's works are carefully planned: he begins with sketches in which he considers the interrelationship of structural elements as well as colour and its values. The process is time-consuming in both the preliminary and executorial stages. The pictorial elements of his paintings are subordinated in an effort to convey order, clarity and stability. Stylistically, his works are based on the principles of cubism and orphism, as in his *Lithuanian Folkdancers*, 1983 (ill. 161). This is a somewhat atypical genre painting, however, because the structural, serpentine lines give a strong feeling of movement to the picture.

Most of Bieliūnas's paintings are landscapes in which a static atmosphere dominates. An example is *Abandoned Farm*, 1984 (ill. 162); here, the structural facets are larger and the mood of decay, dilapidation and tranquillity is enhanced by the use of preponderant blue hues. In the middle eighties Bieliūnas began to participate in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Painter **Aga Skeivys**³⁵⁸ was born on 16 January 1922, on the Buknaičiai estate in Mažeikiai county, the third in the family of Kazimieras and Agota Dimavičius. She was educated on her father's estate by private tutors and later attended a private finishing school in Panevėžys. In 1940, with the Communist occupation of Lithuania, life changed suddenly. Her father's estate was confiscated and she went to work as a clerk.

In 1944, before fleeing to the West, she married Viktoras Skeivys, an accountant. They took refuge in Coburg Displaced Persons Camp in Bavaria, where their son Rimvydas was born in 1947. In 1949 they migrated to Australia. Viktoras Skeivys worked for two years as a labourer for the Transport Department while his wife remained in the Greta Camp in NSW with her son. On completion of his work contract, he moved with his family to Sydney. Both parents worked until their son had completed his education: Viktoras Skeivys in the Railways Department and Aga Skeivys as a dressmaker.³⁵⁹

Although she did not begin artistic activity until she was of mature age, Aga Skeivys had been aware since her youth that she had artistic talent. In

³⁵⁸ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 9 Jan. 1988.

³⁵⁹ In 1977 their son, Rimvydas, graduated from the University of Sydney with a Master's degree in Computer Science.

Australia, she began to hear and read about successful Lithuanian artists and this, along with her visits to art exhibitions, made her think seriously about her own ability. In 1973, she enrolled at the Arts Centre at Willoughby, and in 1985 began studies in Ryde at the Willandra Art School where teacher Leslie Rippon gave her much encouragement. Skeivys says that by studying art she feels she has achieved something for which she had been unconsciously striving all her life.

She admires abstract art, particularly the work of John Coburn and Leonard French. Her early paintings have obvious reference to landscape, and are rendered in semi-abstract style, impressionistic and romantic. Her *Burned Forest*, 1981 (ill. 163), although depicting a dismal scene, is rendered in romantic mood. The musical rhythm achieved by the regular placement of blackened tree trunks, the use of a limited colour spectrum and the smooth application of paint are the means whereby Skeivys creates an appealing image despite the tragic nature of her subject.

From about 1983, Skeivys' works became abstract as her paintings *Eruption* (ill. 164) and *Amber* (ill. 165), both 1985, show. In these abstract works spontaneity is evident and emotion is vividly expressed. Underlying the apparent chaotic burst is an arrangement of subtly defined, minute forms, and a merging of rich colours with contrasting sombre tones. In *Amber* especially, she exhibits her dexterity in controlling the flow of colour and in her ability to utilise artistically the occurring accidents for textural enrichment.

Daina Bernotas,³⁶⁰ a painter, was born, one of five children, on 1 April 1933 in the Telsiai county of Western Lithuania. Her father, Stasys von Huck, was of German extraction but his family had lived in Lithuania for 300 years. He was an Agricultural Science graduate, had inherited the large Viešvienai estate and was a socialist. Land reforms during Lithuania's period of independence had reduced his landholding to a mere 120 hectares, but, according to his daughter, he bore no ill-will.

In 1941 the family moved to the West and settled near Berlin. In 1945 the Russians occupied the region, crammed refugees into wagons and drove them to an unknown destination. Daina's family escaped from the train in Prussia and for two years lived in the deserted countryside, suffering cold and hunger and having at times nothing to eat but tree bark and moss from beneath the winter snow. They slowly made their way to Klaipėda, a harbour city in Lithuania, where they found the former population of about 50,000 was now reduced to only about 500. The family moved on, eventually reaching their old

³⁶⁰ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 8 Jan. 1988.

home where they were given shelter by former servants. Bemotas's 23-year-old brother Jurgis joined the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters who were hiding and fighting in the forests; he was killed soon afterwards. Fearing reprisals for themselves and for those who were sheltering them, the family members were not able to claim his body. A month later, the father died from a heart attack, and the rest of the family decided to move to the town of Telšiai and merge with other citizens. Daina enrolled at Telšiai High School in 1948. Two years later she was one of only seven successful applicants, from a total of three hundred, to gain entry to the School of Art. However, her non-proletarian background was discovered and she was expelled. She returned to high school and completed five years of secondary education.

In 1952, she married Stasys Bemotas. At that time, mass deportations to Siberia were still being carried out, generally at the instigation of local communist bodies. When rumours reached them that people of German origin could migrate to Germany, the Bemotas family applied to the German Consulate in Moscow. They waited two years for their visas, during which time both lost their jobs and ration cards and became dependent on the secret charity of friends.

In 1959 Stasys and Daina, with their newly-born daughter Erika, arrived in Germany and in 1960 they migrated to Australia. Here two sons, Stasys and Jurgis, were born. She worked as a hospital aide and her husband as a gardener. In 1979 she retired because of ill health, and since then has devoted her time to art. In 1980 her husband disappeared, most probably because of his great fear of communist persecution. In 1981 Bemotas enrolled at the Padstow Art College and graduated in 1985. During this time she attended a one year ceramic course at the Liverpool Art College and from 1986 to 1987 attended a fashion design course at the same institution.

Bemotas's joyous paintings are in complete contrast to many of her life experiences. 'Art for me', she said recently, 'is an escape to the fairy-tale world. In the bleakest times of my life, the will to live was sustained by fantasy alone.' And, indeed, Bemotas's art portrays a happy, carefree, fairy-tale world. Although she admires Van Gogh, Picasso and other modern artists, her own works are primarily decorative, personal statements depicting legends, fanciful flowers and landscapes, the forms of which combine folk art and orphism. She uses pure, brilliant colours.

Her early paintings of Lithuanian legends were done in a highly decorative, stylised manner: in *Jūratė*, 1982 (ill. 166), for example, she depicts the story of the legendary goddess who lived beneath the Baltic Sea in a castle of amber and who fell in love with a mortal fisherman. Dividing the objects into colourful, flat planes, Bemotas interweaves *Jūratė*, the sun, the boat and the

waves as a single moving unit. The tragic legend is perceived in its happiest moment and has a fairytale atmosphere.

A musical element is a distinctive feature of her landscapes, e.g. *On the Shore*, 1983 (ill. 167), in which she evokes the simple melody of a nursery rhyme by rhythmical composition and pure colours. The folk-art simplicity is evident in the triptych, *Flowers*, 1984 (ill. 168), where she interprets Lithuanian folk art motifs of Lithuanian dowry boxes with fresh decorativeness and stylisation.

FOLK ARTISTS

Lithuanian folk-art items are highly regarded by Lithuanians, the general public and artists alike. For many years, however, they were not accepted as part of Lithuanian Days art exhibitions because the organizers were reluctant to display high art and folk art at the same time.³⁶¹ It was not until 1978 that folk art items – traditional crosses, roofed poles, some up to four metres in height, and woven sashes -- were exhibited alongside high art. This was at the Lithuanian Days Art Exhibition at the Bankstown Civic Hall Art Gallery. Up to that time, small folk-art displays had been held on special occasions such as Catholic conventions, ethnic festivals, the St. Kazimieras Fair and Scouts jamborees, providing opportunities to purchase nostalgic reminders of Lithuania.

Until the mid-sixties, there were only two folk artists working in Sydney, carvers Aleksandras Jakštas and Edvardas Lašaitis. Their output was insufficient to meet their compatriots' demand for souvenirs and gifts. In the sixties, Teresė Dailidė, b. 1939, added her high-quality woven sashes to the folk-art repertoire. She was the first in Sydney to produce locally woven Lithuanian articles.

Despite tuition and demonstrations by Aleksandras Jakštas at Lithuanian weekend schools and Scout camps, there are no second-generation folk-art carvers in Sydney. There has been a more positive response to weaving lessons and demonstrations, but, so far, no second-generation weavers have participated in exhibitions.

The most dedicated of Sydney's folk artists is Aleksandras Jakštas,³⁶² a graduate in geodesy³⁶³ and an illustrator. Although from his childhood he had

³⁶¹ As told by Ratas to the author in 1966, after he had organized the Lithuanian Days art exhibitions at the El Dorado Art Gallery, Sydney.

³⁶² Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 7 Jan. 1988.

³⁶³ Geodesy: the branch of science concerned with determining the exact position of geographical points and the shape and science of the earth.

admired Lithuanian crosses and roofed poles, he did not gain an interest in making them until after World War II when, in 1945, he was a refugee in the Displaced Persons Camp in Wiesbaden in Central Germany. There, Jakštas taught mathematics and technical drawing in the Lithuanian-organized Trades School. The school became known for its production of fine wooden toys, was given financial support by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and was transferred to better accommodation in nearby Offenbach where carving classes were introduced. Ignas Končius, a professor of Physics and an authority on folk art, became Head of the school which from then on produced miniature Lithuanian crosses, roofed poles, jewellery boxes, picture frames and other souvenirs with Lithuanian folk-art motifs. Jakštas became interested in carving, attended classes and learned to carve using an ordinary pocket knife, the only tool available at the time. From then on, he continued to produce carved folk-art items.

One of seven children, Jakštas was born on 26 February 1914 in Tauragė in Lithuania. His parents were Alma and Edvardas Jakštas and his father was a locksmith. At school he did well at painting, drawing and mathematics and was advised by his teachers to study architecture. However, his financial circumstances led him to enrol at the Kedainiai College of Geodesy in the hope of earning money from the practical activities conducted in the long summer vacations. He completed studies there in 1938, and after working for two years enrolled at the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas for further studies in geodesy. He graduated in 1943, having a year previously married Vitalija Dambrauskaitė with whom he fled to the West in 1944.

After migrating to Australia in 1949, Jakštas settled in Sydney where he worked as a labourer with the NSW Department of Main Roads, later becoming a draftsman and then an engineer with the same department until his retirement. During his spare time Jakštas worked in the folk-art tradition, carving and weaving. As well, he was an active leader of Sydney's Scouts group, and was its Chief Scout from 1949 to 1975. He has received a number of medals in recognition of this work. He continues to be active as an illustrator for Lithuanian newspapers and scouting journals, as a designer of emblems and medallions and as a producer of Christmas cards.

Two examples of his work are *Lithuanian Cross*, 1952 (ill. 169), and *Wooden Platter*, 1970 (ill. 170). The first is a traditional cross from the junction of which radiate the sunrays composed of stylised tulip blooms. The second is Jakštas' free interpretation in carving of folk-art symbols incorporated into a nostalgic scene, that of a sunrise with a sower at work on his own land in front of his homestead. The inscription on the rim of the platter reads 'Tėviškė'

meaning 'Homeland'. Jakštas is a regular participant in the folk-art section of Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Edvardas Lašaitis³⁶⁴ is an enthusiastic and prolific folk artist and author as well as a composer and singer of humorous ballads. The youngest of ten children, he was born into the family of Juozas and Ona Lašaitis on 13 October 1935, in Kybartai, Lithuania. His father, a coal miner returned from Scotland, was a talented man and he and his wife were well known singers in their community. They formed a 'family choir' and sang to the accompaniment of the father's accordion. Edvardas started primary school in Lithuania but completed it and three classes of high school in the refugee camp at Schwäbisch Gmünd in Germany. The famous Lithuanian artist Vytautas Jonynas established a folk-art school in this camp. Edvardas spent hours observing the carving process but was too young to join the classes.

The family migrated to Australia in 1951 and for three years lived in a reception camp in Cowra, NSW where Edvardas attended the local high school. In 1953 he participated in his first group folk-art exhibition at the camp with two others -- Algis Laukaitis and Ričardas Jarašius. In 1954 Lašaitis's family moved to Sydney. He tried a number of different jobs, eventually working as a salesman. In 1965 he married a teacher, Julia Vinevičiūtė, and they have three children. An active member of the Sydney Lithuanian community, he participates regularly in Lithuanian folk-art exhibitions.

His carving is noted for its modest, faithful representation of old symbols with an economy of detail. *Lithuanian Cross*, 1965 (ill. 171), is a wooden, miniature version of a traditional Lithuanian cross. Emanating from the junction of its two parts is a floral wreath incorporating stylised sunrays. *Roofed Pole*, 1970 (ill. 172), is a version of another traditional relic. It is a stylised Tree of Life, incorporating three spheres -- sky, earth and underworld -- which are represented by symbols of birds, flowers and the Žaltys.

In 1976 Lašaitis was awarded first prize for a carved cross in the folk-art section at the Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Melbourne. His carved Lithuanian crosses have been presented to the Pope, to Catholic bishops in Sydney, to Keston College in London and to many eminent visitors from overseas.

Weaver Teresė Dailidė,³⁶⁵ b. 1939, arrived in Australia in 1962 as the proxy bride of Pranas Dailidė. Her birthplace, Punksas, is situated in a predominantly Lithuanian-populated district beyond the south-west border of Lithuania which

³⁶⁴ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 18 Jan. 1988.

³⁶⁵ Information gained from the artist in informal conversations and from *Mūsų Pastogė*.

after World War I came under Polish domination. Dailidė, *nee* Slavickaitė, migrated to Australia in order to avoid persecution from Poles and Russians. She found life in Sydney very different from that to which she was accustomed and said, 'Here there are no looms, no weeding in the fields and no cattle to care for.'³⁶⁶

Beyond comments of that nature, however, Dailidė, a shy, retiring person, said little about her background or her personal life. She joined the Lithuanian community and began to participate in art exhibitions, showing in the folk-art section sashes which she had woven, using the art form still very much alive in her native land. She was the first within the Sydney Lithuanian community to exhibit locally woven sashes of high quality. Her designs and colours followed faithfully the traditional patterns and her technique was highly skilled (ill. 173).

In the early eighties, Dailidė withdrew from community activities and it was claimed that she had developed a persecution complex. Soon afterwards, she disappeared but it is believed that she is still living in Australia.

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTING ARTISTS

Through the years, the Lithuanian community in Sydney has held regular celebrations which have required hall and stage decorations, posters, invitation forms and, often, illuminated addresses. This work has usually been carried out by talented individuals who are grouped under the heading, Community-Supporting Artists. Two outstanding contributors have been Algis Plūkas and Bronius Genys.

Algis Plūkas (1922-1976)³⁶⁷ was a multi-talented person: stage decorator, designer of theatrical costumes, illustrator of books, magazines and newspapers, and conductor of the Lithuanian choir and of smaller musical groups. As well, he often acted as carpenter and electrician during the preparation of events. His stage decorations varied in style according to each particular play: for traditional theatre, he produced realistic stage settings; for fairy tales, fantasy decorations; but he always made three-dimensional properties, usually of plywood (ill. 174). Sometimes his decorations were embellished with coloured veils to produce the effect of distance or of moving clouds or waves. Plūkas was especially noted for his stage decorations for

³⁶⁶ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 7 Feb. 1962.

³⁶⁷ Information gained from personal acquaintances of the artist and from *Mūsų Pastogė*.

children's theatre and for beautifully executed posters. In 1968 he illustrated in realistic style the book of Ava Sadargas's play for children, *Sigutė*.

Plūkas was born on 1 January 1922 into the family of organist Ignas Plūkas, in Kupiškis, Northern Lithuania. In 1943 he completed his studies at Kupiškis High School where he was known as an excellent draftsman and decorator as well as a Scouts leader.

He migrated to Australia in 1949 and, from the time of his arrival, became immersed in Sydney's Lithuanian activities. At the completion of his two year work contract, he gained employment as a jeweller. In 1952 he trained and conducted a mixed double quartet; from 1954 to 1957 he conducted the Sydney Lithuanian mixed choir; in 1959 he trained a male double quartet, known as Rožytės (Little Roses) which performed a light, comic repertoire.

From 1952, following divorce from his wife Ona Burokaitė, he began to lead a Bohemian lifestyle, working only spasmodically and living in the annexe of the Lithuanian House at Bankstown. He was, nevertheless, an important asset to the Lithuanian community and to Scouts jamborees where he acted as leader, musician and cook. He died suddenly on 9 June, 1976.

Bronius Genys³⁶⁸ is an invaluable community member able to produce stage decorations, hall decoration and pamphlet illustration at short notice. He was one of the initiators of the first Lithuanian weekend school in Sydney which began in 1950 in his newly built fibro cottage in Horton Street, on the then sparsely populated outskirts of Bass Hill in western Sydney. The school staged theatrical performances for which Genys painted stage decorations. These were realistically rendered Lithuanian landscapes in oil. He also prepared ornamented certificates for the school 'graduates'. For his own enjoyment he paints romantic landscapes and still lifes.

Genys, one of seven children, was born on 25 January 1917 in Dovainonių village, in the county of Rumšiškės. In 1934 he graduated from Kaišiadorys Technical College where he did well in drawing, painting and poetry writing. In 1937 he travelled to Rome where he completed studies at the School for Missionaries of the Salesian Order in 1940. It was decided to send Genys to Lithuania where he worked as a missionary in an orphanage in Vilnius. In 1944 he joined partisans fighting against the oncoming Communists, was wounded and was taken to Wolterdingen Hospital in Germany. In 1945 whilst a resident of the displaced persons camp, he taught art at the Lithuanian High School in Wolterdingen. In 1947 he married Genovaitė Ražaitytė. They have three children. In 1949 they migrated to Australia where

³⁶⁸ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 30 Nov. 1988.

Genys worked for thirty years, until his retirement, in the NSW Water, Sewerage and Drainage Department which later became the Water Board.

The following artist does not fit strictly into any of the categories of this thesis. Trained in Lithuania and Germany in traditional Lithuanian weaving, she later transferred to Fine Arts History and has achieved success as an art historian.

Danutė Giedraitytė,³⁶⁹ weaver, art teacher and art historian, is believed to be the first person to have undertaken extensive research into the stained and painted glass used in the Sydney area in the period circa 1830 to circa 1920. Her work has been a valuable contribution to both Lithuanian and Australian cultural circles.

From her arrival in 1949 until her move to Sydney in 1963, Giedraitytė was an active member of the Melbourne Lithuanian community, working on various committees and with the Scouts organization as well as being productive in artistic spheres. She was the first Lithuanian artist in Melbourne to work with a large weaving loom which she had specially made and on which she produced woven items of large dimensions; she was also the first to exhibit Lithuanian folk-art items at Australian shows. At the Royal Melbourne Show in 1958 she was awarded two first prizes and one second prize for woven sashes, items of national costume and larger woven items.³⁷⁰ Her weaving is distinctive for its ethnic authenticity, harmonious design and meticulous attention to technique.

Born in Kaunas on 6 June 1923, Giedraitytė grew up with her younger sister Grožvyda in a family of teachers and writers. Their parents introduced them in early childhood to visual, literary and musical art forms. Their mother, Illuminata, and father, Antanas Giedraitis (whose pen-name was Giedrius) wrote and published some thirty books for children.³⁷¹ Giedraitytė remembers being attracted from her early days to many forms of art, including opera and drama of which her mother was especially fond. When her father became a school inspector, the family lived for short periods in several parts of Western Lithuania.

In 1941, Giedraitytė completed her secondary education in Jurbarkas where her favourite subjects had been art, languages and sport. In 1942 she enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art and studied general art subjects for two

³⁶⁹ Bio/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 30 Nov. 1988.

³⁷⁰ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 239

³⁷¹ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 7, p. 211

years. In 1944 the family fled from Lithuania and settled temporarily in Southern Germany.

From 1947 to 1949 she studied weaving at L'École des Arts et Métiers in Freiburg-im-Breisgau under Anastazija Tamošaitienė, recognised as one of the greatest authorities on the subject. She also studied History of Art at the University of Freiburg.

In 1949, Giedraitė migrated alone to Australia and settled in Melbourne where she carried out her two-year contract as a factory worker. In 1952, while working at various jobs, she enrolled at the University of Melbourne for part-time studies in History of Art, Theory of Music and French; she gained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957. She then worked for a short time as a librarian at the Teachers College Library at the University of Melbourne and studied towards a Diploma of Education, receiving this in 1962.

As salaries for men and women were equal in NSW, Giedraitė moved to Sydney where she became an art teacher. In 1970 she enrolled at the University of Sydney as a part-time student for a Master of Arts degree. Because of illness, she did not complete her thesis, 'Stained and Painted Glass in the Sydney Area c.1830 - c.1920', until 1982. Since then she has been a permanent art teacher at the School of Distance Education in Sydney.

Seeking information for her thesis, she visited and photographed over 110 ecclesiastical and secular historical buildings, and researched archives, old newspapers and letters. She made a number of discoveries which enabled her to revise certain prevailing views on the origin, manufacture and evaluation of stained glass in the Sydney area.

Her pioneering work has clarified and enhanced academic knowledge of a specific aspect of Australia's heritage and has become a basic reference work and catalyst for further study on the subject.

SYDNEY: AN OVERVIEW

It can be seen that, especially in the early years, the activities of the Lithuanian community in Sydney and most Lithuanian artists living there were closely linked. Until 1970 Sydney was regarded by Lithuanians in Australia as the centre of community and cultural activity and, indeed, this was generally so: the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council and its official publication *Mūsų Pastogė*, had their headquarters there; visiting overseas community leaders and performing artists used Sydney as their base; and Lithuanian artists

living there played leading roles in community and cultural activities. Their participation in Australian mainstream art exhibitions and their successes in art competitions received wide coverage in the Lithuanian press, making them widely known and highly respected throughout Lithuanian communities in Australia and overseas. Artists who received the most publicity were probably Šalkauskas, Kubbos and Urbonas but most artists' endeavours and achievements were reported in the press.

Following the temporary transfer of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council from Sydney to Adelaide in 1970, Sydney ceased to be regarded as the permanent centre of community activities. Lithuanian artists in Sydney, however, were still seen as the leading Lithuanian artists in Australia. Many continued to be actively involved in community and cultural activities, organizing exhibitions, writing on art and serving on committees. In these ways they retained the support and respect of the general Lithuanian community.

Not surprisingly, artists of the Vanguard group were the most closely involved with the general Lithuanian community. Their experiences and memories of their homeland, their strong need to use their native language for ease of communication, their mutual support in new, often strange surroundings: all these factors held them close to their fellow Lithuanians. They were given further moral support by the community's traditionally romantic image of the artist as a person to be honoured.

It is nevertheless true to say that with the passage of time and the assimilation of many Lithuanians, particularly of the younger generation, into Australian ways of life interaction between artists and the community has become less intense. Members of the second generation who are engaged in artistic activities tend generally to become more involved with their peer groups, often comprised largely of Australians, and in many cases Lithuanian traditions are assuming less importance year by year.

CHAPTER 5

LITHUANIANS IN MELBOURNE

*You go and you choose
and you never know,
With roadways all round you,
which way to go.*

Author unknown

(Translated from the original Lithuanian)

The first post-World War II Lithuanian migrants to Melbourne arrived in 1948. They were mostly young single males, the majority of whom were immediately directed to remote areas of Australia, often for timber-felling or sugarcane-cutting or to the Snowy Mountains to work on the hydro-electric scheme. A small number were given work in Melbourne and surrounding areas. Those who arrived in the following year included, as well as young, unmarried males, a number of single women and newly married couples, some with children. By 1950 some 2,000 Lithuanians were settled in Melbourne and its suburbs.³⁷²

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

In 1948, informal folk-dance and choral groups were set up by the fifty or so Lithuanians working in factories and hospitals in Melbourne, even though they were living in various parts of the city and suburbs and had little time or opportunity to create formal organizations.³⁷³ On the other hand, those employed as road workers at Watsonia in north-eastern Melbourne did not form dance or choral groups but felt a greater need to consolidate as a more formal group: on 8 September 1948, during the celebrations in their work camp for Lithuanian Day, they established a branch of the Lithuanian Association³⁷⁴ which was already functioning in Sydney. The Watsonia meeting was attended

³⁷² *Metrašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 220

³⁷³ Kazys Mieldažys, *ibid.* p. 26

³⁷⁴ Australijos lietuvių draugija

by thirty-five people.³⁷⁵ In other parts of Victoria, such as Sale and Mornington, where larger groups of Lithuanians had already settled, local Australian Lithuanian Association branches were also formed. In 1949, the various Victorian branches merged and were reorganized as the Melbourne Lithuanian Community,³⁷⁶ an affiliate of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council³⁷⁷ based in Sydney. Each local branch was run by an elected council with the aim of fostering Lithuanian culture, organizing commemorative events, co-ordinating community activities and representing the interests of Lithuanians in Australian society.

In Melbourne, the Catholic sector of the Lithuanian community was proportionately the strongest in Australia.³⁷⁸ In the early days Catholics aimed to become the dominant force on community councils and in other activities, but failing to achieve this, formed their own Catholic organizations. Although theoretically within the framework of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council and even though the supremacy of the Federal Council was acknowledged, the Catholic duplication weakened the cultural, educational and economic capacity of the Lithuanian community. Catholics established a parallel Lithuanian Catholic weekend school, published their own newspaper, built their own parish meeting house and formed the Melbourne Lithuanian Catholic Women's Welfare Organization.³⁷⁹

During biennial Lithuanian Days festivals, the Catholic sector attends and participates in various events, Federal Council meetings and council elections, but also holds separate conventions. Because of these divisions, it is necessary to discuss separately the activities of the general community and those of the smaller Catholic sector within it.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Musical Activities

The most popular form of artistic expression among Lithuanians, young and old, is choral singing. The Melbourne Lithuanian choir developed from the male choir organized by Petras Morkūnas, b. 1922, during the 1948 sea voyage to Australia. In 1950 it became a mixed choir conducted by Albertas Čelna, b.

³⁷⁵ *Metraštinis*, Vol. 1, p. 26

³⁷⁶ Melbourne lietuvių bendruomenė

³⁷⁷ Australijos lietuvių bendruomenės krašto valdyba

³⁷⁸ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 15, p. 712

³⁷⁹ *ibid*

1916. In 1951 it was named Aidas (Echo) and since 1956 has been known as The Melbourne Lithuanian Daina (Song) Society.³⁸⁰

Folk-dance Groups

One of the favourite pastimes of young Lithuanians is folk dancing. The first folk-dance group was formed in 1949 by Ava Saudargas³⁸¹ while travelling by ship to Australia. Saudargas was its director until 1956 when, following her move to Sydney, it was re-organized into an ensemble, Atžalynas (Offshoot). Stasys Eimutis³⁸² introduced into the ensemble an orchestra of folk instruments, the only one of its kind in Australia. The ensemble performed for the Australian public at Moomba festivals, Scouts jamborees, old people's homes, hospitals and ethnic concerts. It disbanded in 1962. In 1963 Alena Karaziņa formed a new group of younger dancers, Klumpakojis (Clog Dance) which is carrying on the work of Atžalynas.³⁸³

Creative Dance Group

In Melbourne's cultural life a special role was played by the Creative Dance Group formed in 1950 by Dada Nasvytis³⁸⁴ and re-organized in 1953 into the Creative Dance School. The dancers performed to the music of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Schumann, Čiurlionis and other classical composers. Performances were given for the general Australian public, but even the patronage of orchestral conductor Sir Bernard Heinze and other eminent persons was not sufficient to attract large audiences.³⁸⁵

Theatre Group

Established by Petras Morkūnas in 1950, the Theatre Group gave its first performance with scenography by Aleksandras Gabas a year later. Other visual artists, including Viktoras Simankevičius and Adomas Vingis, were responsible for scenography in later productions while Gailutė Gasiūnas and Elena Kepalas were producer and choreographer respectively. Especially active as organizer,

³⁸⁰ Melbourne lietuvių dainos sambūris

³⁸¹ See pp. 76-77

³⁸² See pp. 245-246

³⁸³ *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 38

³⁸⁴ See pp. 192-193

³⁸⁵ *ibid*

producer and choreographer was Dana Nasvytis who hoped to establish a permanent youth theatre. However, when this was not achieved, from the mid-fifties until the early sixties activities practically ceased. Theatrical productions were revived by folk artist Nikas Cininas with scenographic assistance from Gabas, Adomas Vingis. Bronius Žiedas and Alisa Baltrukonis. the last serving also as producer. Plays by local Lithuanian playwrights supplemented the earlier repertoire which had contained only works by well known Lithuanian writers.

The Theatre Group (under various names) has played to Lithuanian audiences in Geelong, Adelaide and Sydney as well as in Melbourne.³⁸⁶

Lithuanian Weekend Schools

An early, urgent concern of the community was the education of the children. In 1950, former teacher, Juozas Makulis, b. 1907, organized at Carlton the first Lithuanian weekend school and was its principal for the next five years. The curriculum comprised lessons in Lithuanian language, history and geography as well as singing and folk dancing. Several teachers were invited to give instruction to the girls in sash weaving and to the boys in wood carving. Fr. Pranas Vaseris taught religion. The school was attended by about fifty pupils and operated until 1955 when Fr. Vaseris established the Lithuanian Catholic Weekend School and took with him half the students. The remainder were re-located many times until finally accommodated at Lithuanian House in Thornbury. Smaller weekend schools operated at Clayton, Altona, Glenroy, St. Albans, Mornington, Collingwood and Maribyrnong.³⁸⁷

Australian Lithuanian Cultural Foundation

A significant early organization was the Australian Lithuanian Cultural Foundation³⁸⁸ formed in 1948 by Gabrys Žemkalnis, b. 1925, Jurgis Glušauskas-Armonas (1909-1970) and others. Its aim was to foster Lithuanian culture by founding libraries and theatre groups, by organizing art exhibitions and concerts and by establishing prizes for literary and artistic activities. In 1954, 1955, 1956 and 1958, the Foundation organized art exhibitions, concerts, literary evenings and theatre performances. It also established branches in Sydney, Adelaide and Geelong. In 1958, the Supreme Australian

³⁸⁶ Metrašiis, Vol. 1, p. 236; Vol. 2, pp. 300-303

³⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 204

³⁸⁸ Australijos lietuvių kultūros fondas

Lithuanian Community Council decided to form the Australian Lithuanian Cultural Council and took over the functions of the Australian Lithuanian Cultural Foundation. From then on, branches of the Foundation ceased to exist, but the Melbourne headquarters continued to organize lectures until 1964.³⁸⁹

Australian Lithuanian Foundation

In 1972, the Supreme Australian Lithuanian Community Council approved the formation of the Australian Lithuanian Foundation. In its Memorandum of Association, the Foundation's goals are: 'To encourage, sponsor and foster Lithuanian cultural activities within the Commonwealth of Australia.' In 1977 it was registered as an incorporated body and became an independent charitable organization, working in close association with the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council and local community councils. The Foundation collects donations and bequests and, from interest gained on invested capital, sponsors various activities; provides prizes on a regular basis for academic writing, painting and sculpture on Lithuanian themes; publishes books; and supports song, folk-dance and sporting groups.³⁹⁰

Šviesa (Light) Organization

In 1950, Jonas Kalpokas, b. 1921, Danutė Žilinskas (1927-1988) and Danutė Simankevičius, b. 1922, former students of Tübingen University in Southern Germany and members there of the Šviesa (Light) Organization, re-established Šviesa in Melbourne. They arranged occasional lectures, lecture series and meetings to commemorate great writers and artists. Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis³⁹¹ published an academic study of Dr. Vincas Kudirka,³⁹² one of the most prominent activists of the 19th-century Lithuanian National Movement.

King Mindaugas Institute

In 1950, the King Mindaugas Institute was established in Melbourne by Professor Pranas Viktoras Raulinaitis (1895-1969).³⁹³ Public lectures on art,

³⁸⁹ *Metrašius*, Vol. 2, p. 254

³⁹⁰ *Metrašius*, Vol. 2, pp. 71-3

³⁹¹ Father of recent Lithuanian president, Vytautas Landsbergis.

³⁹² *Kudirkos sąjūdis*. Melbourne, 1952.

³⁹³ Former professor of law at the universities of Kaunas and Vilnius.

science and politics were delivered until 1954 when its founder moved to the USA.

The Australian Lithuanian Students Society

This was formed in 1951, with a membership of about fifty and Algimantas Žilinskas, b. 1922, as its first president.³⁹⁴

Lithuanian Language Course

In 1952, Albertas Zubras, a former high-school teacher, devised a Lithuanian language course for senior students. In addition to language study, the course included Lithuanian literature, poetry and history. In 1971, the course was re-drafted and, after much controversy, Lithuanian was recognised in Victoria as a matriculation subject.³⁹⁵

Young Journalists Group

In 1956, Albertas Zubras formed a Young Journalists Group with the aim of preparing graduates from the Lithuanian Language Course as correspondents for the Lithuanian press. The success of the group became apparent in 1984 when Jonas Mašanauskas, b. 1959, established the English-Lithuanian quarterly, *Jaužiniai*.

Čiurlionis Discussion Club

In 1962, Antanas Krausas and artist Adolfas Vaičaitis³⁹⁶ established the club, the aims of which changed over time. At first, when intellectuals of the first generation were active enough to deliver lectures and conduct seminars, there was a concentration on philosophical matters. Later, the club engaged mainly in organizing art exhibitions and concerts, often inviting overseas Lithuanian artists and performers -- mainly from the -- USA whose fares to Australia were partly paid by the club.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ *ibid*

³⁹⁵ *Metrašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 246

³⁹⁶ See pp. 193-196

³⁹⁷ *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 231

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Sport

By far the largest youth organization is the Sports Club. Varpas (Bell), established in 1950 and still active. The most popular sports are basketball, table tennis and chess, the last being played also by older people. Regular sports training sessions are held and members take part in annual sports tournaments held in rotation in the larger Australian cities.

Scouting

In 1948, Scouts groups began in Melbourne, and in addition to the more usual activities, Lithuanian songs, folk dances, folk-instrument playing and traditional carving were included. There were sections for girls as well as for boys and for senior and academic scouts. Regular summer camps were held and, often, camps were conducted in school holidays during the year. Almost all weekend-school students were scouts and participated in interstate Lithuanian jamborees. Scouts in Melbourne eventually numbered more than one hundred.³⁹⁸

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Association was formed in 1952 by a group of women led by Danutė Simankevičius.³⁹⁹ It aimed to help the sick, the lonely and the needy. As well, the women provided catering for lectures, concerts, meetings and conventions, over time simplifying the kinds of refreshments offered. Much of the voluntary work done by the Association was taken for granted and not fully appreciated. In the eighties membership began to decline because of the advancing age and ill-health of members and the activities of the association diminished accordingly.

THE LITHUANIAN COOPERATIVE CREDIT SOCIETY

In 1961, Lithuanians in Melbourne followed the lead of successful co-operatives in the USA and Canada and established the Lithuanian Co-Operative Credit Society, Tarka Ltd. In its early years it functioned with voluntary

³⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 240.

³⁹⁹ See p. 248-249.

workers and used members' savings to provide loans at rates of interest lower than those given by banks. Talka remains the only commercial enterprise of the Lithuanian community and one of its purposes is to distribute profit to cultural organizations in the form of prizes and financial support. Branches have been established in both Adelaide and Sydney.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LITHUANIAN HOUSE

The Lithuanian community of Melbourne has had more than fifty organizations, some of which have been confined to specific professions with small memberships, e.g. the Lithuanian Teachers Association, the Lithuanian Legal Association, the Lithuanian Architects and Engineers Association and the Lithuanian Medical Society. Their activities were held initially in various hired halls which proved financially burdensome. It became evident that a community venue was needed, and the Lithuanian Community Council set up a steering committee, in the first instance to investigate the feasibility of acquiring a community meeting-house. In 1950 the committee began to seek donations, and in the first year 40 pounds was raised. By 1956 donations had increased to 2383 pounds and in 1958 a suburban dwelling at No. 12 Francis Grove, Thornbury, was purchased for 6600 pounds. However it was soon apparent that the house was much too small for the community's needs. In 1964 it was sold for 8250 pounds.⁴⁰⁰

It took more than eighteen months to find new premises. In late 1965, the steering committee purchased a large but dilapidated building, formerly a cinema, at 44-50 Errol Street in North Melbourne for 28750 pounds.⁴⁰¹ The premises were near a railway station and had enough room for a library, a Lutheran chapel, a theatre, office space for Talka Co-Operative, two meeting halls, kitchen and dining room. Because the building required extensive repairs, many people worked voluntarily on its refurbishment over many years.

LITHUANIAN CATHOLICS

In 1950 Lithuanian Catholics organized themselves into the Australian Lithuanian Catholic Association which in 1954 was re-named the Australian Lithuanian Catholic Federation.⁴⁰² Its headquarters are in Melbourne with branches in Sydney and Adelaide. It aims primarily to promote religious life and

⁴⁰⁰ *Metrafiis*, Vol. 1, p. 222

⁴⁰¹ *ibid*, p. 273

⁴⁰² Australijos lietuvų katalikų federacija

religious education.⁴⁰³ During biennial conventions held on a rotational basis in major cities, there is a programme of lectures, concerts and folk-art exhibitions, though on a much smaller scale than the Lithuanian Days festivals which are organized by the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council.

In 1956 the Catholic Federation purchased a Parish House in the Melbourne suburb of Kensington to accommodate the Catholic Weekend School and to serve as a meeting, celebration and entertainment venue. In the same year, following the lead of the wider Lithuanian community, Catholics formed a folk-dance group, *Gintaras* (Amber), mostly of students from the Catholic Weekend School. Also in 1956, the Catholic Federation founded its own weekly newspaper, *Tėviškės aidai* (Echoes of Homeland), the editorial and administrative offices of which were at the Parish House. The paper's first editor was Rev. Petras Bačinskas, b. 1912. A youth organization, *Ateitininkai* (People of the Future) and a Lithuanian Catholic choir were organized. Jonas Juška was the first conductor of the choir.⁴⁰⁴

A primary objective of the Catholic Federation was to purchase a church building in Melbourne. However, efforts to gain permission from the Archbishop of Melbourne for the acquisition of a church exclusively for Lithuanian worshippers were unsuccessful. For celebration of Mass and other religious observations, Lithuanian Catholics hired St. John's Church in East Melbourne at an annual rental of \$1200.⁴⁰⁵ There were large attendances on special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Lithuanian Day and Independence Day, but on ordinary Sundays, numbers began to decrease. In the *Lithuanian Chronicle*, Fr. Vaseris writes: 'In 1950 the Sunday Mass was regularly attended by about 300 people ... Now, [i.e. 1983] the number is about 150 ... it shows that the young generation is not religious any more.'⁴⁰⁶

ACTIVITIES OF SECOND-GENERATION LITHUANIANS

Many second-generation Lithuanians in Melbourne belong to Lithuanian organizations and their cultural activities range widely across musical, theatrical, literary and artistic fields. In the seventies, the Melbourne choir, established in the early days, was the first in Australia to have second-generation conductors: in 1971, Danutė Levickas, b. 1946, became conductor, followed in 1978 by Birutė Prašmutas, b. 1956. Her sister Zita Prašmutas, b. 1953, acted as accompanist. The Daina choir, too, received second-generation members who

⁴⁰³ A. Grigaitis in *Metrošis*, Vol. 1, p. 95

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 267

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid*, p. 265

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid*

were responsible for broadening its repertoire beyond the more usual slow, melancholy Lithuanian songs. In 1975 the Prašmutas sisters organized a female sextet, *Dainava*,⁴⁰⁷ which performs contemporary Lithuanian compositions as well as traditional folk songs.

In 1980, the orchestra *Dabar* (Now) was formed by a group of young enthusiasts. Its repertoire includes Lithuanian versions of popular music and folk songs in adapted, contemporary style. In 1985, a female vocal trio, *Svajonė* (Daydream), was formed and enjoyed great success, touring not only interstate but also in the USA and Canada. In 1988 the group expanded and was re-named *Svajonių aidai* (Echoes of Daydreaming). It has visited Lithuanian communities in South America, the USA, Canada, Germany and Poland as well as travelling to Lithuania. Also in 1988, Stasys Eimutis organized a zither ensemble, *Kanklės*, with a repertoire comprised entirely of folk songs. Most players are second-generation, as also are the pan-pipe players in the ensemble founded in 1989 by Aleksandras Gabas.

In 1980, a number of second-generation Lithuanians headed by Algis Karazijs, b. 1952, established the Melbourne Lithuanian Youth Theatre which has comprised, at times, as many as fifty young actors.⁴⁰⁸ Members write plays, compose music and construct sets as well as producing and acting in theatrical performances. These are often satires on Lithuanian problems and contemporary issues. Since 1980 second-generation Lithuanians have taken part also in ethnic radio programmes on stations 3EA and 3ZZZ, presenting discussion and musical programmes. In 1984, Jonas Mašanauskas, b. 1959, a journalist and playwright, founded the English-Lithuanian quarterly, *Jaučiniš*. A group of young persons, among them artists Jūratė Sasnaitis, Mindaugas Simankevičius, Arūnas Klupšas, Danius Kesminas and Laura Baltutis, contribute articles and illustrations.⁴⁰⁹

Since 1977, many second-generation Lithuanians in Melbourne have played a major role in training and performing in the *Klumpakojis* (Clog Dance) group which performs also during Moomba and Melbourne University Open Days. In 1977 Dalia Antanaitis, b. 1949, took over the leadership of a second dance group, *Gintaras* (Amber), and also its children's group, *Gintariukai* (Little Pieces of Amber). Melbourne's second-generation visual artists working in sculpture, painting and the graphic arts outnumber those in other Australian places. Young Lithuanians in Melbourne are the most effective also in matters of organization: when in 1977 the Seventh World Lithuanian

⁴⁰⁷ A derivative of *daina* (song) and means *land of songs*.

⁴⁰⁸ *Australijos lietuvių 40 metų kultūrinė veikla* (40 Years of Cultural Activities of Australian Lithuanians), 1990, p. 113

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid*

Youth Congress was held in Australia, the principal organizers were second-generation Lithuanian Melburnians.

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN MELBOURNE

Although Melbourne has been home to over fifty first and second-generation Lithuanian artists -- by far the greatest number of any Australian city -- there has never been an attempt to form an association, or even a coterie of artists. Indeed, there has been very little interaction among artists, especially those of the first generation. There are probably many reasons for this, the major one seeming to be the differences in the ability of individual artists to adapt to new situations. Those who came to Australia during their twenties were generally able to adjust to the art mainstream; those who were older were deeply conscious of the exile situation and unable to overcome completely their feelings of alienation. For most of the latter group, it was as if time had stopped when they had left Lithuania. The result was that, while most of the younger artists made efforts to become part of the mainstream in Australia, most older ones concentrated exclusively on cultural activities within the Lithuanian community. A small minority suffered severe depression and avoided contact, social and artistic, with anyone.

VANGUARD ARTISTS

Four of the artists in this group completed their artistic education in Lithuania: graphic artists Adolfas Vaičiaitis and Jonas Firinauskas, both b. 1915; and sculptors Gražina Firinauskas, b. 1918, and Teisutis Zikaras, b. 1922. Of these, Zikaras showed the greatest determination to meet new artistic challenges in Australia, especially in the early years. Others in the Vanguard group are sculptor Vincas Jomantas, b. 1922; theatrical artists Paul Cleveland, b. 1925 and Dana Nasvytis (1916-1983); Viktoras Simankevičius, b. 1921; and painter Juozas Baukus (Joseph Banks), b. 1909.

During the fifties especially, the sculptors were most energetic with Zikaras a leader in the field. During his two-year work contract in Melbourne factories from 1949 to 1951, he was able to visit the National Gallery of Victoria and other exhibition places and to meet other sculptors. From 1952 to 1955 he worked as assistant to sculptor George Allen in the construction of the

large granite War Memorial, erected in 1955 in the forecourt of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.⁴¹⁰

When in 1956 Vincas Jomantas, after working in Western Australia and country Victoria, came to Melbourne Zikaras was already a lecturer at the School of Art at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and had made many artistic connections. Jomantas, born in the same year and brought up in the same city as Zikaras, and who had grown up in a similar artistic environment, was, at the time of his migration to Australia, a final-year sculpture student in Germany. Both artists associated with other ethnic and local artists in Melbourne, but maintained closest contact with sculptors. As their meetings became more frequent, they lamented the low status of sculpture in Melbourne where painting was clearly the dominant art form. In the immediate post-war period the Melbourne *Argus* had reported that of one hundred exhibitions staged during 1946, only three had been devoted to sculpture.⁴¹¹ Sturgeon states that, in the fifties, 'sculpture was little practised and even less valued in Australia.'⁴¹² Alan McCulloch, art historian and art critic wrote in 1956: 'Australia is not rich in sculpture. Of all arts here it is the least generally understood, the least acknowledged and the least embraced by the artists themselves.'⁴¹³

Generally speaking, neither public nor public funding authorities considered sculpture appropriate for private use and enjoyment. It is true that sculpture has by its nature disadvantages-- such as expense, weight and size -- in comparison to other art forms. It also takes longer to produce and it is more difficult to promote sales. Describing the Melbourne art scene of the period, art dealer Max Hutchinson writes: 'Melbourne was a non-art-consuming city ... there are such cities, in spite of their size, their great museums, where there is not a spirit of involvement with contemporary art and the consumption of it ... Sydney looked to me to be a big spending city compared to Melbourne. I made the sales in Sydney.'⁴¹⁴

It would seem that the migrant sculptors in Melbourne were keen to challenge this situation. They began to organize sculpture-specific exhibitions: in 1954 at the Victorian Sculptors Society North Gallery; in 1955 at the Peter Bray Gallery; and in 1956 at Melbourne University during the Olympic Games. This informal group of sculptors emphasised the place of sculpture as an integral part of architecture and at the same time, of the city. Their concerns were noticed. In 1955, following their sculpture exhibition, Alan McCulloch

⁴¹⁰ Graeme Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture 1788-1975*, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, 1978, p. 137

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 126

⁴¹² *ibid.*, p. 165

⁴¹³ Alan McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 28 Nov. 1956.

⁴¹⁴ Geoffrey van Groen, *Some Other Dream*, Hale and Lemonger, Sydney, 1984, p. 158

said: 'The development of sculpture in any city is synonymous with the development of its architecture ... An important contributory factor to this development is the group, comprising mainly New Australian sculptors, which has suddenly sprung up.'⁴¹⁵ The art critic of the *Age* also acknowledged the efforts of the young artists:

Sculpture may be a neglected art, nevertheless it is a hardy growth and one flourishing in Melbourne today. This is due to the enthusiasm of a band of young sculptors who seem determined to force recognition of the form from an apathetic public. Indicative of this courageous attitude ... [are] sculptures and drawings by Teisutis Zikaras at the Victorian Artists' Galleries.⁴¹⁶

The artistic energy of these young sculptors found expression at art galleries, exhibition halls and outdoor shows. Alan McCulloch again comments:

In a country like Australia which has no sculptural traditions, sculpture is a difficult art. People are not used to looking at it and even the artists, with a few exceptions, don't know what it is or what it should be. This being so, the little exhibition of sculpture at the Peter Bray Gallery is like an ocean breeze puffing out sails of a becalmed vessel. It is by far the most stimulating display of sculpture seen here for several years. It is full of intelligent derivations, which in themselves, suggest the constant need for experiment and invention. Two artists here who stand most firmly on their own feet are Teisutis Zikaras, whose *Figure ...* and *Swimming Figure ...* with their elegant planes and stylistic purity are the major works of the display, and Vincas Jomantas, represented by a modest study in plaster, *Two Heads*. Both are equally well represented in the *Herald* Outdoor Art Show, particularly Vincas Jomantas, whose abstraction in bronze is a feature of the sculpture section.⁴¹⁷

Encouraged by the recognition of their artistic vision, the young sculptors were determined to consolidate their ranks. During informal gatherings, Hungarian-born Julius Kane (formerly Kuhn, 1921-1962) stood out as a leader. In 1959 the Six Sculptors group was formed and comprised Kane, Vincas Jomantas, Inge King, Clifford Last, Norma Redpath and Teisutis Zikaras.⁴¹⁸ Their first joint exhibition was held at the National Gallery of Victoria under the title, 'Six Sculptors'. Art critic Margareth Plant comments: 'This was an unusual acknowledgment on the part of an official Australian gallery of the activity of sculptors in Melbourne.'⁴¹⁹ Graeme Sturgeon says:

The exhibition was a great success from all points of view: on the sculptors personally, and on modern sculpture generally, it bestowed the National Gallery's seal of approval; for Westbrook⁴²⁰ it was the

⁴¹⁵ McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 19 Oct. 1955.

⁴¹⁶ *Age*, Melbourne, 14 June 1955.

⁴¹⁷ McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 6 Mar. 1957.

⁴¹⁸ Only two of the group -- Norma Redpath and Clifford Last -- were Australian-born.

⁴¹⁹ Catalogue, *Centre Five in Heide*, 1984, p. 4.

⁴²⁰ At that time Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

opportunity to publicly affirm his support for contemporary art; and for the public, it provided the chance to see an exhibition described in the first number of a new publication, *Modern Art News*, as 'probably the most impressive display of modern Australian art ever shown in Melbourne'.⁴²¹

Furthermore, in their desire to popularise sculpture as an art form relevant to interior as well as exterior private and public display, the Six Sculptors formulated a number of proposals. In 1960, under the leadership of Julius Kane, the group was re-named Centre Five, its title originating from its five-fold aim set out by Julius Kane:

1. To bridge the gap between artist and public through individual and group activities, including exhibitions and lectures, radio and television appearances, newspaper and magazine articles;
2. To seek better representation in the National Art Galleries of Australia;
3. To foster a closer relationship with architects;
4. To publicise the need in Australia for an art development policy similar to that in other countries based on the principle of devoting a percentage of public building costs to works of art;
5. To seek assistance in creating more scholarships and fellowships for sculptors.⁴²²

In their efforts to convince the general public that sculpture can be a chamber art, the sculptors opened their workshops and conducted educational programmes. Jomantas demonstrated carving and assemblage; Zikaras held classes in *cement-fondu* and terracotta techniques. Other members of Centre Five delivered illustrated lectures, especially directed to architects and students of architecture in an endeavour to show the need for closer co-ordination of sculpture and architecture.

In 1963, The Recent British Sculpture Exhibition visited Melbourne. It was 'the most important event for Australian sculptors'⁴²³ and included work by Robert Adams, Kenneth Armitage, Reg Butler, Lynn Chadwick, Hubert Dalwood, Barbara Hepworth, Bernard Meadows, Henry Moore and Eduardo Paolozzi. With the intention of bringing contemporary sculpture closer to the local population, Centre Five sculptors organized guided tours, public lectures, slide shows and addresses to art societies, students and the general public. 'There began ... a concerted effort to make sculpture a part of the life of

⁴²¹ Surgeon, *Australian Sculpture*, p. 139 as quoted from *Modern Art News*, Vol. 1, 1959, p. 13

⁴²² *ibid*

⁴²³ *ibid*

Melbourne, if not Australia -- and the lobbying of architects, governments and patrons had an effect which is still being felt today.⁴²⁴

Members of Centre Five began to exhibit as a group in Australia and overseas: in 1961 in the Commonwealth Exhibition at the Musée Rodin in Paris; in 1963 at the Newcastle City Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and in Tokyo; and in 1968 in the Commonwealth Travelling Exhibition which toured New Zealand. In the meantime, members also held solo exhibitions. Their activities were rewarded with prizes and commissions from industry and commerce and from local and state authorities. Buildings became more frequently adorned with modern sculptural pieces, gardens with sculptures and sculptural fountains, and public and industrial building interiors with sculptured walls.

The joint activities of the Centre Five sculptors ceased in 1973.⁴²⁵ Much of their energy had been directed towards recognition of sculpture as an important art form for private and public life and the elevation of its status, but artistically they had not sought a unifying style. Indeed, the most interesting aspect of the Centre Five sculptors was the individuality of their work. That of the two Lithuanian sculptors Zikaras and Jomantas showed many similarities but greater differences.

Teisutis Zikaras (1922-1991)⁴²⁶ was born, the second of four children, in Panevėžys in Lithuania. His father, realist sculptor Juozas Zikaras, was a lecturer at the Kaunas School of Art from 1929 until his death in 1944.⁴²⁷ Teisutis said that, from the age of twelve, he spent afternoons in his father's studio where he experienced his quick temper and strict discipline. After completing studies at Aušra Boys High School, Teisutis studied at the School of Art, majoring in sculpture. He graduated in 1943 and in the following year fled to Germany. His parents remained in Lithuania where his father became professor of the School of Art sculpture department, but committed suicide in the same year because of Communist pressure and intimidation.

In Freiburg, Germany, Teisutis Zikaras taught drawing and sculpture at L'École des Arts et Métiers from 1946 to 1948. In 1948 he married one of his students, Skaidrite Rubene, and in 1949 they migrated to Australia where he

⁴²⁴ Simon Klose, Catalogue, *Vincas Jomantas: Sculpture*, McClelland Gallery, 1990, p. 3

⁴²⁵ Catalogue, *Centre Five at Heide*, p. 7

⁴²⁶ Biographical details recorded during author's personal interviews: with the artist 28 Nov. 1988 and with his sister Alytė Zikaraitė, Kaunas, Lithuania, 28 Apr. 1992. Other information gained from interview recorded by Hazel de Berg, 1965 and held by Oral History Dept., National Library of Australia, Canberra.

⁴²⁷ Juozas Zikaras (1881-1944) was noted for many landmark sculptures, one being *Freedom*, revered by Lithuanians for its symbolism. Teisutis Zikaras said that for his father no sculptor existed after Rodin.

spent two years working in a glass factory, followed by several years in Melbourne furniture and metal factories. From 1952 to 1956 he worked as an assistant to sculptors Stanley Hammond and George Allan and, as mentioned, was involved in the construction of the World War II Memorial in Melbourne.

In 1953 Zikaras joined the Victorian Sculptors Society and the Victorian division of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia and participated in their exhibitions. He became an executive committee member of the society. In 1956 he was appointed lecturer of sculpture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, where he remained for twenty years. During the fifties and sixties, Zikaras was active in the Lithuanian community where he advised on artistic activities, served on exhibition committees and displayed his work. His most creative and active years were from 1950 to 1970. From then on, as his health began to fail and his personal life suffered much disruption, his artistic output diminished and, from about 1975, ceased altogether.

Zikaras had several important influences on his work, among them Juozas Mikėnas,⁴²⁸ whose work greatly impressed him. Sculptor Vytautas Kašuba, his teacher at the School of Art and a graduate of both Lithuanian and Paris schools, was another strong influence on the young student who admired Kašuba's inclination towards experimentation and innovation. Both Mikėnas and Kašuba rejected realism and used folk-art carvings as an important source of inspiration. Zikaras came to identify himself with groups proclaiming *avant-garde* ideas, and was especially motivated by a desire to rebel against his father's teaching. He said in 1965, 'My first sculpture was done in secrecy because it was anti-realistic.' The greatest pervading influence however, was unquestionably the folk art of Lithuania, and not until the sixties did Zikaras attempt to change his approach to form and surface treatment and begin to incorporate the ideas used by the artists he most admired after his student days -- Picasso, Zadkin and Henry Moore.

Zikaras's *oeuvre* comprises sculpture and drawings. He worked in a range of media: terra-cotta, plaster of Paris, wood, cement, metallised and oxidised cement and metal. Although he remained a figurative artist throughout his life, his style changed over time. It is possible to divide his sculptural work into two periods: an early period (1945-1960) and a later period (1960-1975).

The early period: In 1952 Zikaras held his first solo sculpture exhibition in Clayton. This was exclusively for his fellow countrymen, most likely to gain self assurance. Reviewer Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkašis called it 'a great feast

⁴²⁸ Juozas Mikėnas (1901-1964) commanded attention in Lithuania in the early forties when, after his return from post-graduate study in Paris, he exhibited sculptures with simplified forms and impressionistic surface renderings.

of art.⁴²⁹ In the same review, the sculptor is quoted: 'In my works I try to express the inner mood by simple means. My figures are closed within themselves.' The works of the early period are solid, monolithic, strongly architectonic and saturated with feelings and emotions of suffering. Zikaras explained that he had a 'feeling for mankind.' In his prize-winning sculpture, *Rūpintojėlis* (The Sorrowful God), 1953,⁴³⁰ the source of this feeling is Lithuanian folk art: fatalistic passivity, submission and retreat into an inner meditation. The same sorrowful and lyrical emotions endow his sculpture, *Motherhood*, 1952 (ill. 175). The articulation of the limbs and the surface treatment suggest softness and human love. However, in the male *Head*, 1952 (ill. 176), Zikaras models with vigour and virile power, dramatically distorting the features to gain a stronger expression and roughening the surface texture accordingly.

This mode of expression is developed further in his later work. Of Zikaras's first solo showing in 1955, art critic Alan McCulloch says:

His art is directly descended from the peasant wood carvings of Lithuania. The men made these traditionally ancient carvings during the long winter nights and hung them on trees in the forests. The result of this influence on Zikaras is a curious, rather fascinating flatness. Contained in the inner rhythms which encompass and unify these quiescent groups is an emotionalism that seems to well up from the depths until it overflows in the intensity of its feeling. Sculpture here is an involuntary gesture, expressing with rare grace and dignity the universality of themes connected with traditional religion and with the tragic circumstances of armed occupation. In Europe one imagines such a show would have a modest success. Here, where sculpture as a pure, untrammelled art form is rarely seen, it is an event of major importance.⁴³¹

McCulloch notes correctly the folk-art influence on Zikaras's work. However, folk sculptures of Lithuania, although often 'hung on trees', were always roofed and most often installed in roofed poles. Above all, folk sculptures were not flat: they were stylised, simplified, disproportionate, but generally round. The flatness of some of Zikaras's work was an idiosyncrasy, as were other features such as distortion of limbs and figure. Among his early works, still in Lithuania, are many bas-reliefs which attest to his inclination to flatness in sculpture.⁴³² His works are visually powerful, a far cry from the helplessness and lyricism of many Lithuanian folk sculptures. Because of his original and individual style, an exhibition in Lithuania of Zikaras's work would have been, I imagine, an event of major importance.

⁴²⁹ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 19 Nov. 1952.

⁴³⁰ *Rūpintojėlis* won second prize at the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition, Sydney 1953. (*Mūsų Pastogė*, 16 Sept. 1953.)

⁴³¹ McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 15 Jun. 1955.

⁴³² The author viewed a number at the Zikaras Museum in Kaunas, 20 Apr. 1992 during her visit to Lithuania.

From 1952 to 1955 Zikaras fluctuated between expression with a lyrical quality and experimentation of a bolder nature. In *Female Figure*, 1955 (ill. 177), the body is rendered in extremely flat planes, whereas the face, executed rather realistically and lyrically, is in direct contrast. His prize-winning sculpture, *St. Francis*,⁴³³ also 1955 (ill. 178), displays harmonious articulation throughout and retains a lyrical, meditative atmosphere. This sculpture however, has received varied assessments. One art critic, Ian Bow, writes:

The architectural treatment of the figure seems mannered by indigenous peasant wood carving, hence the forms have almost medieval rigidity rather than articulated repose. The mood, as is usual with Zikaras, is one of sorrow. In the fairly optimistic climate of the Victorian Artists' Society Galleries, these sculptures make considerable impact.⁴³⁴

Expressive features unfold more fully in his two-figure sculpture, *Pieta*, 1955 (ill. 179), where tension is augmented by the spatial relationship of the two figures. *The Pensive Christ*, 1958 (ill. 180), however, is a fully developed expressionistic work with powerful articulation of distorted planes, pronounced rhythm and sustained inner tension.

The later period: Zikaras's works of this time reflect his tendency towards abstraction. In *Lovers*, circa 1960 (ill. 181), he uses quite a new sculptural vocabulary: impassioned sweeping planes and the reduction of the two figures into two powerful trunk-like structures united by contrasting, horizontal curves. This is an exceptional work because it suggests movement and is in contrast to Zikaras's usual static repertoire. The notions of reduction and simplification are developed in *The Bride*, circa 1960 (ill. 182), where the female figure is portrayed solely as a sex symbol. The slim, bare, vertical structure is emotionless and faceless and has only fundamental female physical features. The rough, coarse texture of the surface is in keeping with the overall, contemptuous treatment of the subject. Further simplification of the female form is seen in *Figure*, circa 1960 (ill. 183), executed in jarrah. Here, woman is reduced to a pear-shaped, faceless cylinder. Zikaras's aluminium sculpture, *Figure*, circa 1960 (ill. 184), is the culmination of the complete dehumanisation of the human body. The reduction of the human form is expressed in an abstract, mechanical structure, the sleek lines of which have an emotionless simplicity.

In his last sculptures Zikaras returns to Lithuanian imagery. His *Horseman*, 1960 (ill. 185), derives from the Lithuanian state emblem, Vytis, in

⁴³³ Awarded Barnett McCutcheon Prize, Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition, Melbourne, 1955.

⁴³⁴ Ian Bow, 'Sculpture - Religious and Secular', in *Architecture and Arts*, Melbourne, Nov. 1955, p. 15

simplified and sophisticated form. Basically a linear, open sculpture, beautifully articulated and with pronounced rhythm, it aims at elegance, a quality rare in his *oeuvre*. *Warrior*, 1974 (ill. 186), has its roots in Lithuanian history, the subject resembling a medieval knight, complete with embellished armour. Although it has superficial hints of Boccioni, the sculpture is static and solid.

Zikaras was commissioned to execute several major sculptures. One is *Fountain*, 1961 (ill. 187), which was erected in the Plaza of the Melbourne General Post Office.

Drawings: Zikaras was a competent draftsman and left hundreds of drawings, most of which served as preliminary sketches for sculptures. He modified his ideas in many ways, as he explained: 'I prepare a number of drawings, sometimes hundreds, and I get triggered off by some important thing that I want to develop; what I do on paper, helps me. Then I go in three dimensions. I work feverishly.' Most of his drawings were executed in ink and wash and some were coloured. In drawing, as in sculpture, he underwent a metamorphosis of style, yet all have the same strong, articulate hand. After Zikaras's Retrospective Exhibition of Drawings 1954-74, art critic Alan McCulloch wrote: 'The drawings retain a sculptural character in which distortion and linear relationships have rarely been better understood.'⁴³⁵

Such a remark is apt but there are exceptions, moments when Zikaras deviates from 'the sculptural character', as in *Untitled I*, 1955 (ill. 188) and in *Drawing no. 14*, 1958 (ill. 189).⁴³⁶ In the first, an abstract coloured drawing, and in the second, an ink drawing of a female figure, Zikaras reveals the youthful and romantic side of his personality in soft colour-strokes and subtle lines. However, most of his drawings from the early years do show the 'sculptural character' referred to by McCulloch. An example is *Untitled*, circa 1952 (ill. 190), in which the figure is conceived as cubistic and sculptural. Colour, applied sparingly and moderately, plays a secondary role to assertively expressed form, e.g. *Coloured Drawing*, circa 1952 (ill. 191).

Zikaras's principal artistic theme was the female figure. One of numerous examples is *Drawing*, circa 1960 (ill. 192), obviously related to the jarrah-executed *Figure*, circa 1960. His artistic approach to women changed from the romantic, as in *Drawing no. 14*, 1958, to Picasso-like aggressiveness and contempt as in *Drawing no. 26*, 1966 (ill. 193), and in *Drawing*, 1974. In the last two, the artist tears the female figure into pieces with forceful lines and powerful distortions unified only by softer tonal washes.

⁴³⁵ McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 12 June 1974.

⁴³⁶ Drawings numbers taken from catalogue of 1974 exhibition.

Organizational Activities: As a young man Zikaras was actively associated with a number of organizations. In 1947 he became a member of the Lithuanian Institute of Art, established in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, and participated in its exhibitions.⁴³⁷ In Australia, as previously mentioned, he joined the Victorian Sculptors Society and in 1957 was elected to the executive committee. In 1953, he joined the Victorian branch of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia. Probably his most important organizational role was as one of the founders of the sculptors association, Centre Five, in 1960.

He was active within the Lithuanian community only until the sixties. In 1958 he was a member of the steering committee which organized the Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Melbourne.

Vincas Jomantas.⁴³⁸ was born on 24 September 1922 into an artistic family in Kaunas. His father, Vilius Jomantas (1891-1960), was a well known graphic artist and was awarded some twelve art prizes.⁴³⁹ He had a great interest in folk art and in 1919 was selected by the Lithuanian Artists Society as a member of the commission for the collection of folk-art items in Lithuania.⁴⁴⁰

In 1940 Vincas Jomantas completed his secondary education at the Jesuit Boys High School in Kaunas where his art teacher was Alfonsas Janulis, b. 1909, a stylised realist sculptor. At the time Jomantas was interested mainly in sports, mechanics and technology and intended to study architecture. In 1942, however, he enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts in Vilnius to study sculpture. He says, 'I don't know why ... maybe, because I like to build things ... to search in material.' In 1944 he fled on his own to the West and spent time in a refugee camp in Bavaria. In 1946 he enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts and the School of Applied Arts in Munich.

He migrated to Australia in 1948 and worked for two years as a timber-cutter in Western Australia. After moving to Victoria in 1951, he worked as a house-painter and later for two years in a furniture factory where he gained a good knowledge of Australian timbers. From 1955 to 1960 he was employed as a draftsman at the Victorian Rivers and Water Supply Commission. In 1956 he renewed acquaintance with Teisutis Zikaras who introduced him to the Victorian Sculptors Society and the Contemporary Art Society. Jomantas began what were to become lasting friendships with Victor Greenhalgh, Lenton Parr, Julius Kahn and a number of other Australian artists.

⁴³⁷ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 25, p. 99

⁴³⁸ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 30 Dec. 1987 and from de Berg audio tape, National Library, Canberra.

⁴³⁹ I. Korsakaitė and I. Kostkevičiūtė, *xxa Lietuvos dailės istorija*, (20th Century History of Lithuanian Art), Vilnius, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 236

⁴⁴⁰ I. Korsakaitė, *Gyvybinga grafikos tradicija*, (Vigorous Tradition of Graphic Art), Vilnius, 1970, p. 51

He became involved in sculpture activities, was a foundation member of the Centre Five group and participated in their exhibitions. In 1960, Jomantas was appointed to the Fine Arts department of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology where he lectured in drawing, composition, colour and design. In 1964 he became a lecturer in sculpture, and later, Head of the Sculpture department at the Institute until his retirement in 1987. Until Jomantas 'resolutely developed his own style',⁴⁴¹ his work was subjected to several major influences. The basis of his sculptural idiom is inherited from the Lithuanian folk-art tradition and modified by various schools, chief among them cubism, constructivism and abstract art. He has said, 'I approach work from an idea ... I don't appreciate any work which is more or less purely formal.' Although he works from an idea, at the same time he pays great attention to surface finish; which demands time and endurance. Probably this explains his saying, 'Art is labour and nothing else. Art is exclusive.' Although he works in many media including cement, polyester, wax, bronze and plaster of Paris, his favourite medium is wood because, he says, 'It seems that wood is alive.' Except for his very early works, Jomantas is basically a non-figurative, symbolic artist. Key concepts of his sculptures are myth, fate, and sacrifice executed with serenity and austerity. He achieves an idiosyncratic synthesis of monumentally and introspective meditation. His *oeuvre* may be classified as of four kinds, although with the exception of the first, it shows no sharp chronological dividing line:

Figurative Works : 1950-1956;

Romantic-Symbolic : 1956 to about 1964;

Geometric-Symbolic : from about 1964 to about 1975;

Emblematic-Symbolic : from 1975 onwards.

All his work possesses the same cardinal characteristics: impeccable craftsmanship, close attention to surface finish and the assembling of separate entities.

Figurative sculpture period: During this brief and atypical period Jomantas worked with the image of the human figure. Examples of his sculptures of this time are *Bluebird*, *The Birth of Venus* and *The Sitter* (ill. 194), all 1955. They exemplify Jomantas's striving for simplification of form, elimination of detail and smooth finish. *The Sitter*, a stylised female figure, is executed boldly yet elegantly, as are the other two. There is some indication of the influence of Barlach and Brancusi in his use of broad planes and great terseness.

⁴⁴¹ James Gleeson, *Sun*, Sydney, 3 Apr. 1974

Romantic-Symbolic Period: In the late fifties, Jomantas began to work in abstract style, taking Lithuanian folk art as the basis for his sculptural vocabulary. In some works he uses direct images, in others the created images are imbued with a folk-art feeling. His first major work in this style was *Sculpture* (ill. 195), executed in bronze in 1958 for the Physics Building courtyard at the Australian National University in Canberra. It is a flat, spatially oriented sculpture in which the geometric entities derive from the image of the sun. The simplified forms and dissected rays allude to emanation and movement; under the influence of cubism the simple Lithuanian symbol of the sun is fragmented and reduced in complexity.

Elwyn Lynn writes: 'Jomantas' formality derives from Cubism: an impacted array of forms held together not by a concern with fastidious and meticulous placement, but by an inner dynamism. His piece at Canberra ... has a monumental austerity.'⁴⁴²

Jomantas's ethnic vocabulary attained a different, formal expression under the influence of new artistic styles, cubism and constructivism. A further example is his 1963 Mildura prize-winning bronze sculpture, *Guardant* (ill. 196), which, according to Alan McCulloch '... is endowed with classic serenity: the forms are still, straight, varied, subtle.'⁴⁴³ The concept of *Guardant* probably originates from Lithuanian ornamental crosses which are embellished with intricate, stylised sun rays at their junction. Although the ornamentation has been varied and modernised on the pole and at the top, the sculptor has retained the basic construction, flatness of the cross and a meditative attitude. Such an attitude is manifested even more emphatically in Jomantas's wood sculpture, *Birds of Death*, 1964 (ill. 197). Inspired by Lithuanian mythology where the bird always symbolises a messenger, this is a metaphoric sculpture open to interpretation on several levels: as an omen, as an act of fate or as recent war experience. It consists of four principal parts, each of which comprises many laminated, horizontal layers cut according to the grain of the wood, glued together and then assembled to form one majestic unit. Just as a jeweller polishes gold, so Jomantas treats wood, enhancing its softness to a velvet-like quality by scorching and wire brushing. This is a very slow process and perhaps further explains the artist's statement that 'Art is labour and nothing else.' The velvety surface tends to soften the sombre message of the sculpture and to evoke feelings of acceptance rather than rejection of death.

The sculptures *Meditators* (ill. 198) and *Sacrifice I*, (ill. 199), both 1964, and *Myth*, 1966 (ill. 200), also seem to convey similar fatalistic and meditative messages. Of Jomantas's work, art critic Bill Hannan commented that Jomantas 'is subdued and extraordinarily meticulous both in his

⁴⁴² Elwyn Lynn, *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, Sydney, 1967, p. 8

⁴⁴³ McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 22 Apr. 1964.

craftsmanship and his design. Despite the fine attention to surface these are rather severe works.⁴⁴⁴ In the mid-sixties, Jomantas began to explore new materials such as polyester and to juxtapose the 'new' and 'old' media. Two examples are the wood and bronze *Sacrifice I*, 1964, and the wood and plastic *Sacrifice II*, 1966 (ill. 201).

Geometric-Symbolic Period: A number of Jomantas's sculptures are in minimal style. These were executed in the period from the sixties to the seventies. They are abstract, less personal, with plain surfaces and produced from polyester and aluminium. Two examples are *Awakening of Giants*, 1967 (ill. 202), and *Landing Object 2*, 1971 (ill. 203), both rendered in polyester. Contrary to the usual definition of minimalist sculpture, these two pieces are imbued with symbolic connotations. Art critic Noel Hutchinson found *Awakening of Giants* 'pregnant with symbolic intention' and with 'an eerie quality', and considered that in the sixties this work in polyester was 'quite a technical advance for that time'.⁴⁴⁵ The coolest and least personal sculptural entity in Jomantas's oeuvre is *Screen*, 1968 (ill. 204), which won the prestigious Comalco Invitation Award for sculpture in aluminium and is now installed in the Australian Chancery in Washington, USA. However, even this purely abstract, geometric work evokes music and arouses emotional feeling. *Screen* occupies a wall seven metres long and is nearly half a metre in depth. It consists of hundreds of rods which by their varying diameters and lengths create a celebration of rhythmical movement enhanced by the play of light.

Emblematic-Symbolic Period: Sculptures in this group include a number which refer explicitly to symbolic subjects. Among these are *Eternal Sailor*, 1976 (ill. 205), *Procession*, 1981 (ill. 206) and *Beacon*, 1985 (ill. 207). These images are reminiscent of the work of the great Lithuanian painter, M.K. Čiurlionis, and reflect his philosophy that 'life is a journey from the unknown to the unknown.' Čiurlionis influenced a whole generation of Lithuanian artists, especially those linked with the literati. It would seem that, in his own idiosyncratic way, Jomantas expresses the same mystical and fatalistic ideas in his emblematic sculptures. His way of using symbolic images distinguishes him from other important Australian sculptors. In 1974 James Gleeson writes:

He has turned his back on the enticements of Assemblage and is resisting the stylistic pull of such innovative giants as Henry Moore, David Smith and Anthony Caro, yet there is nothing outdated about his work; he has simply developed his own sculptural idiom along different

⁴⁴⁴ Bill Hannan, *Catalogue of Centre Five Exhibition*, Gallery of New South Wales, 6 Oct. 1965.

⁴⁴⁵ Noel Hutchinson, 'Australian Sculpture in the 1960s', in *Other Voices*, Oct.-Dec. 1970, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 14

lines from those currently regarded as forming the mainstream of modern sculpture ... each piece carries the imprint of concentrated thinking, long gestation and exquisite resolution.⁴⁴⁶

Over the years, aided by 'technical virtuosity and consistency'⁴⁴⁷ Jomantas has contributed significantly to the development of Australian sculpture and public awareness of it. Alan McCulloch says of him, 'The elegance and perfectionist finish of his style earned Jomantas a leading place in Australian sculpture.'⁴⁴⁸ In 1961, 1965 and 1968 Jomantas's sculptures represented Australia in Paris, Tokyo and New Zealand respectively.

Although Zikaras and Jomantas were of the same age, were raised in the same city in very similar artistic and home environments, and the source of their work sprang from the same Lithuanian folk art, the artistic products of each were very different. Zikaras remained figurative and basically static, although he was influenced by expressionism. He showed more direct reference to Lithuanian folk art and, having an extrovert personality, modified folk art features with forceful expressionistic distortions. His trademark is the elongation of schematised limbs, figure and facial countenance. Although his central theme, especially in the Early Period, is sorrow, he renders it with virility and power. Jomantas, on the other hand, was figurative only in the early stages of his career and his work was more influenced by cubism and minimal art than expressionism. Jomantas identified with folk art more in feeling than form whether in abstract, geometric or emblematic sculptures. Of his work, Lenton Parr writes: '... the sculptures ... are surrounded by echoes and resonances, quiet and disquiet ... reverberating like the bell, charging the atmosphere with rumours of other times, other places, old and new alarms.'⁴⁴⁹

Jomantas's central themes are also sorrow and fate, but he, an introvert personality, renders these themes without force, and in a dignified manner. He uses symbols through which he beckons the viewer to concentrate attention and to contemplate. Following their appointments to teaching positions at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, both artists concentrated their energies on teaching and administrative work and on their own sculpture careers. As a teacher, Zikaras said that he emphasised the importance of originality. His dictum to students was 'Don't be a follower; don't kill your individuality. Observe around you and have a shield. Outside grows a tree. When I draw it, it is my tree; when you draw it, it is yours. The same tree can't be the same.' Jomantas's philosophy emphasised premeditation, patience and endurance. He said, 'Art is not talent; art is labour.'

⁴⁴⁶ Gleeson, *Sun*, Sydney, 3 Apr. 1974.

⁴⁴⁷ Jeffrey Makin, *Sun Herald*, Melbourne, 8 Dec. 1972, p. 30

⁴⁴⁸ McCulloch in *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, p. 296

⁴⁴⁹ Catalogue, *Vincas Jomantas: Sculpture*

For personal reasons, Zikaras ceased artistic activities in the late seventies; Jomantas has continued, even after retirement, to produce meticulous, non-figurative sculptures. Unlike Zikaras who paid more attention to powerful expression and executed impulsively and with verve, Jomantas ponders at length upon an idea until the image matures and assumes a satisfying shape. The sculpture is then executed with infinite patience, serenity and austerity, myth, fate and sacrifice being the key themes of his work. He achieves a rare, idiosyncratic synthesis of monumentally and introspective meditation.

Another artist who managed to merge happily with the mainstream was television designer and director, scenographer, lecturer and painter **Paul Cleveland**,⁴⁵⁰ who played an important role in the early years of Australian television production. Although when he arrived in Australia he had not completed formal art training, his literary, musical and theatrical knowledge and experience enabled him to find his niche. Responsible for the overall design of television productions, his work included the creation of authentic and appropriate sets, lighting, costumes, hair-styles and make-up for period performances. This entailed careful research as well as the use of creative imagination, and usually required him to work to strict deadlines.

He was born Rimgaudas Povilas Četkauskas⁴⁵¹ on 23 December, 1925 in Kazliškis in the Lithuanian county of Rokiškis. His mother Adelė, a teacher, and his father Povilas, a musician, were transferred frequently; consequently, Paul's education was subject to a variety of influences. Probably the most important were his father's organization, training and conducting of various orchestras and choirs and Paul's own schooling in Šilutė⁴⁵² where he came into contact with German culture. From 1935 he studied at the Aušra Boys High School in Kaunas completing his studies in 1943. During these years he was a regular theatre-goer and enjoyed both the visual and musical aspects of drama, ballet and opera. He says that the impact of the lavish costumes and stage decor was so striking that he constantly lived in a make-believe world. In 1943, Cleveland enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art where he studied scenography and design under Liūdas Trukys (1904-1987), a stage designer and Paris art-school graduate. In 1944, he fled to the West and after the war spent time in a refugee camp in Munich. For a brief period he attended a scenographic art course at the camp. Later, he enrolled concurrently at the Akademie der

⁴⁵⁰ Biog/ed details recorded during personal interview with the artist Jan. 1989 and in letters (undated) from artist.

⁴⁵¹ In 1956 he changed his former name by deed poll to Paul Raoul Cleveland.

⁴⁵² Šilutė is near Lithuania's border with Germany.

Bildenden Künste to study art and at the UNRRA University to study architecture and philosophy.

In 1948, Cleveland migrated to Australia and fulfilled his work-contract at a brickworks in Melbourne, later working as a draftsman with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. In 1950 he married Elvyra Sliesoriūtė, a pharmacist, and they have two children. In 1955 Cleveland enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and in 1958 received an Associate Diploma of Industrial Design. In 1959 he began work in Melbourne as a television designer for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. He was production designer for many drama, ballet and opera performances. In 1969 he graduated from Melbourne University receiving a B.A. degree with majors in fine arts and musicology. In 1970 he undertook post-graduate study in television design production in Rome, Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne and Amsterdam. In 1975 he worked in London for the British Broadcasting Corporation and in 1976 visited the NHK television studios in Tokyo. In 1980 he received an Australian Film and Television award for best art direction and in 1982 was a judge in the Best Set Design award.

Although Cleveland's main field of artistic activity is television production design, in the early years of his artistic career he was active also as a painter. His paintings are experiments in various styles. *Riviera*, 1964 (ill. 208), is an impressionistic townscape-seascape. The picture surface is covered by a mosaic of multiple colour-patches. A carnival-like atmosphere is achieved by the spontaneous execution and the random distribution of a colour web. The overall impression of this oil painting is reminiscent of the work of Dufy. In other paintings, Cleveland remains more conservative and contemplative, e.g. *Flower*, 1960 (ill. 209). This is the expression of the self-confessed pantheist artist's brotherly feeling for Nature. Here he uses the traditional symbol of Mother Sun as a beneficent and life-giving force, although the shape is distorted. Cleveland was involved in Lithuanian artistic activities during the fifties and after his recent retirement. He also participated in earlier Australian exhibitions such as the *Herald Art Shows*.

Cleveland's knowledge of theatrical stage-set production and of the inter-relationship of scenography, sound and lighting in the creation of atmosphere was significant during the infancy of Australian television in the fifties. He already knew the psychological power of coloured lighting in the theatre having, he says, learned its effective use from Liūdas Truikys, his first scenography teacher. The same basic principles apply in television production, but with more limited application because of close-up focusing which gives emphasis to authenticity and detail of costume, make-up and surroundings.

As a production designer, Cleveland had responsibility for the overall design of television performances and therefore authenticity and communicability depended largely on him. He divides his television productions into three categories: fantastic, realistic, and historical.

Fantasy Productions: These allow the greatest freedom in respect to scenery, costuming and lighting. Cleveland said, 'With a fantasy world ... the requirements are as unlimited as the range of the writer's imagination.'⁴⁵³ In fairytale ballets and other fantasy productions, Cleveland often resorted to non-representational forms in the creation of scenery. In the *Kamahl Show*, 1975 (ill. 210), with the aid of serpentine panels, he produced a sense of other-worldliness in ambiguous space. The flowing ballet costumes of light, transparent material and skilful, coloured lighting combine to create a world of romantic imagination. Other fantasy productions with geographical settings required the development of the appropriate scenario and atmosphere, e.g. *Peer Gynt*, 1960 (ill. 211).

Although merely looking at a photograph of a stage setting does not make it possible to experience the music and movement of a performance, there is nevertheless a strong, visual impact. In the *Peer Gynt* scenery the stylised fir trees, with appropriate lighting changes, produced shadows with the effect of a rhythmically moving forest complementing the movement of the dancers. Thus it can be realised how, with minimal artistic means, Cleveland was able to achieve richly evocative scenes which had emotional and visual impact.

Contemporary Realistic Productions: Such productions restrict the producer's imagination and their communicability depends largely on authenticity. They require research into social history and the background of the play to ensure that visual presentation is accurate. One such production by Cleveland is *The Tongue of the Dragon*, 1985 (ill. 212), in which, because of a restricted budget, he created different scenes by making only slight changes to stage properties.

Historical Productions: The success of these depends very much on knowledge and research, and personal innovation has a limited place. However, there are no boundaries in the representation of details of costume, make-up and interior and exterior background. Cleveland's many successful historical productions include *Martin Luther*, 1964 (ill. 213), *Vecherinka*, 1965 and *The Lawson Stories*.

⁴⁵³ *TV Times*, 6 Sept. 1967.

In reviewing television performances, art critics are concerned mainly with the acting, the script and its interpretation and with the musical accompaniment. Scenery and lighting are given only scant, passing reference, but costumes, especially extravagant ones, generally draw comment. Of *The Rivals*, 1961, one of the regular ABC inter-office memos reports: 'A delightful production of high style comedy ... the settings by Paul Cleveland were excellent and the costumes no less than magnificent.'⁴⁵⁴ David Friith reviewed the production of the opera *Martha*, 1964, and says of the scenography, 'Paul Cleveland's sets and costumes were breathtakingly lavish.'⁴⁵⁵ After the performance of *Lucinda Brayford*, 1980, Cleveland said: 'I love the genteel life. Although there is beauty in decay and you can do something like Dickens with cobwebs and dust, I prefer the genteel, the delicate and civilised -- the urbane if you like. With this play you can inject a bit of charm because it portrays the sort of life where people are aesthetically aware and have the leisure and money to indulge their finer sensibilities.'⁴⁵⁶

Choreographer, theatrical designer, dance teacher and pioneer of expressionist dance, **Dana Nasvytis** (1916-1983)⁴⁵⁷ attempted by her individual efforts to introduce to Australia an art form not before seen here. Her creative dance performances were a combination of expressionist dance and living sculpture (ills. 214 and 215). Born into the family of medical practitioner Motiejus and Salomėja (*nee* Banaitytė) Nasvytis in Moscow in 1916, she returned with her parents to Lithuania after World War I and completed secondary studies at Aušra High School in Kaunas in 1935. In the following year, she began to study expressionist dance in Berlin at the Jutta Klamt School from which she graduated in 1939. Following her return to Kaunas she organized many solo and group performances at the State Theatre and in other Lithuanian towns and was given financial support by the government to establish the Expressionist Dance School. After her marriage to violinist Stasys Gabrijolavičius, the couple fled in 1944 to the West where they experienced the Allied bombardment of Dresden. After the war Nasvytis organised solo and group concerts in various parts of Germany. In 1948 the couple migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. In 1949 her only child, Sigitas,⁴⁵⁸ was born, and in the following year, Nasvytis formed the Creative Dance Group of Lithuanian girls. Their first public performance was given at an International Concert in Melbourne in 1951.

⁴⁵⁴ ABC Inter-office Memo, 25 Oct. 1961, supplied by the artist.

⁴⁵⁵ *Sun*, Sydney, 3 Jul. 1964.

⁴⁵⁶ *TV Times*, 15 May 1980.

⁴⁵⁷ Biographical details given by her son, Sigitas Gabric, 1 Nov. 1987 and in conversations at various times with personal acquaintances.

⁴⁵⁸ See p. 220-222

In the same year the group, in conjunction with the Lithuanian Theatre Group, performed *Jūratė and Kastytis* in Melbourne. This was a spectacular production but so expensive that the Lithuanian community was unwilling to subsidise further performances.⁴⁵⁹

In September 1952, at the Melbourne University Great Hall the Nasvytis dance group gave a special performance for the Australian press and distinguished guests from artistic circles. As a consequence the group received the patronage of eminent conductor Sir Bernard Heinze and financial backing from an anonymous benefactor.⁴⁶⁰ This enabled the establishment of the Dana Nasvytis Creative Dance School where graphic artist Adolfas Vaičaitis lectured in art history and art appreciation and poet Julija Švabaitė (who later migrated to the USA) gave lectures on Lithuanian literature. Students of the school performed in Melbourne, Ballarat, Sale, Geelong and Adelaide for the general public, schools, hospitals and for army personnel.⁴⁶¹

Nasvytis practised expressionist dance as a synthesis of musical and visual art. The father of this revolutionary dance concept had been Frenchman, Francois Delsarte (1811-1871). Unlike classical ballet, the movements are related to rhythmic gymnastics, with barefoot dancers robed in striking costumes. Nasvytis interpreted classical music as abstract, transient sculptures formed by human bodies. These visual tableaux were enhanced by her ingenious costume design, stage settings and coloured lighting. Her costumes reflected the music and her stage sets generally comprised simplified, symbolic entities such as a single column, a tree or the sun. She enhanced the powerful visual impact by the use of coloured lighting, an art she most probably learned from scenographer Liūdas Truikys in Lithuania. The colour and intensity of light, skilfully blended to match the musical mood, acted as a complementary sculptural shadow play. However, financially the school operated at a loss and the Lithuanian community, still consisting of comparatively new settlers with few assets, was unable to assist. Australian society at that time showed little interest in cultural performances by migrants, and even the patronage of Sir Bernard Heinze and the encouragement of several other prominent Australians were not sufficient to overcome the financial problems of the school. In 1959, it was forced to close and for the next twenty-four years Nasvytis taught gymnastics and expressive dance at the Clarendon Presbyterian Ladies College and other girl's schools in Warragul, Box Hill and Sale. She died in Melbourne in 1983.

⁴⁵⁹ From a letter to the author by Aleksandras Gabas, 1992.

⁴⁶⁰ Salomėja Valiukienė in *Moteris*, No. 5, 1984, pp. 4-12

⁴⁶¹ *Metras'is*, Vol. 1, p. 238

Other artists of the Melbourne Vanguard group were much less involved in the Australian mainstream and their activities were confined largely to the Lithuanian community. A major contributor to Melbourne's Lithuanian artistic and cultural activities is graphic artist **Adolfas Vaičaitis**.⁴⁶² He was born the eldest of five children on 16 June 1915 into a farming family in the Plikiškiai village in the county of Joniškis. He attended Joniškis High School to and from which he cycled eight kilometres each day and where his best subjects were drawing, poetry and singing. He was much admired by his schoolfellows for his ability to play a number of musical instruments and to recite poetry at length and for his singing. Following a severe drought in Lithuania in 1928, his family suffered great hardship and, at the age of thirteen, Vaičaitis had largely to support himself. In 1932 he decided to become an artist, and although his family had expected him to become a priest, a doctor or solicitor, they gave him their blessing. He enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art from where he graduated in 1939, receiving the Galdikas prize for his graphic work, *Užgavėnės* (Shrove-Tide Carnival). During his student years he sent illustrations and caricatures to the press and participated in various art competitions. In 1938 his poster won the Red Cross first prize of 300 litas.⁴⁶³ He says that he and his friends spent an 'unforgettable week' in celebration of his win, even though the money should probably have been spent more wisely. In 1939 he graduated, having majored in graphic art.

After working as a high school art teacher in Jurbarkas, a small provincial town lacking artistic stimulus, he moved to Kaunas. He secured a position as art director of the state book publishing company, Spindulys (The Ray) with responsibility for publication design. There he met poets and authors, some of whose books he designed and illustrated. He participated in art exhibitions and designed exhibition catalogues. In 1940, with the Soviet invasion, Spindulys was nationalised. Vaičaitis's designs and illustrations were now changed or rejected by a philistine Communist superior, although Vaičaitis's name still appeared in the publications. With the return of the Soviets in 1944, Vaičaitis joined the massive wave of refugees fleeing to the West. After the war he moved from the Ravensburg refugee camp to Freiburg-in-Breisgau where he took an active part in Lithuanian cultural life, designing and illustrating books, exhibiting and lecturing in art. From 1945 to 1949 he worked at the Herder Publishing Company in Freiburg.

In 1949 Vaičaitis migrated to Australia. His first job was in a Melbourne glass factory but he was unable to cope with the work. After leaving on grounds of ill health, he found a position as a draftsman with the Victorian

⁴⁶² Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 27 Nov. 1987.

⁴⁶³ At that time 300 litas represented a large sum of money equivalent to one month's salary for a high ranking public servant.

Forestry Commission and remained there until his retirement in 1981. Never able completely to reconcile himself to life in Australia, forty-three years after leaving his homeland, he said, 'With my first step onto foreign soil, I felt that I had left everything behind: my youth, my happiness, my purpose.'

These feelings have persisted in spite of his artistic success, the publication of two luxurious folios of his graphic work and his high standing in the Australian Lithuanian community. For many years he was an active member of the Lithuanian community: in 1956, he was president of the Australian Lithuanian Cultural Foundation; in 1958, a member of the organizing committee for the second Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Melbourne and organizer of the first Lithuanian Children's Exhibition; in 1962, with Antanas Krausas, he founded the Čiurlionis Discussion Club; in 1964, he organized and curated the Third Lithuanian Art Exhibition during Lithuanian Days. As well, he lectured on art at the Dana Nasvytis Creative Dance School and was a regular reviewer of art exhibitions for the local and overseas Lithuanian press. In exile he was twice married and divorced, and after a number of disagreements with various committees, gradually retreated from public life. He says, 'Only art, music and poetry sustained in me the will to live.' Vaičaitis's *oeuvre* consists of graphic art and paintings.

Graphic Art: Book illustrations form the major part of his graphic work. His early work is characterised by realistic representation and classic rigid, closed composition. *Shrove-Tide Carnival*, 1939 (ill. 216), a polycoloured linoprint, is an example and has been described as 'quite a rare ... print ... of those days'.⁴⁶⁴ Here, the village spectators, shown as passive and placed in a second plane, contrast with the two principal actors, portrayed in the first plane in a legendary, active role and providing movement and excitement. In similar realistic style are the illustrations for the children's books, *Lapino vestuvės* (The Foxes' Wedding), by Liūdas Dovydenas, 1939, and *Lietuviškos pasakos* (Lithuanian Fairytales) by Dr Jonas Balys, 1940.

In Germany Vaičaitis encountered the works of the modern French masters whose free-flowing lines, as in the paintings of Matisse, influenced his style. He began to lose the rigidity of his earlier figures, learned to relinquish realistic detail and to open his compositions. His illustrations became elegant and smoothly executed.

In 1948, he illustrated a book written by Dr. Julius Kaupas, *Dr Krištukas pragare* (Dr. Krištukas in Hell) and a folio, *Seven Lithographs* which included some illustrations from the Kaupas book. Despite the post-war scarcity of materials, Vaičaitis's large-format folio was well designed and

⁴⁶⁴ Korsakaitė and Kostkevičiūtė, *xxa. Lietuvių dailės istorija*, Vol. 2, p. 353

exceptionally well presented. Art historian Alexis Rannit writes in the Preface: 'The secret of the artistically creative effect lies in the simplicity of the means with which the themes are treated: with but a few elegantly rounded lines which, though contours are often interrupted, form an organism the artist creates a unified whole that seems drawn with a simple gesture.'³⁶⁵

Probably the most impressive lithograph is *The Doctor and the Devil* (ill. 217). The free and sensitive linear rendering of the figures and the grey tones which darken the devil's apparel give a convincing and delightful depiction of the pair about to descend to Hell, depicted as Kaunas, where many poor, sick devils are waiting for the doctor's help. *The Cemetery* (ill. 218), another lithograph, has a bird's-eye perspective and open composition. Using graceful lines, devoid of detail, the artist depicts a cemetery with two thieves running from the scene. Each of the seven lithographs has a quality of lightness. While still in Germany, Vaičaitis designed and illustrated a rhymed *Alphabet*, 1946, and a year later, a literary chronicle, *Tremties metai* (The Years of Exile). In 1948 he illustrated a book of poems by Jonas Aistis, *Pilnatis* (Full Moon). In Australia, Vaičaitis varied his medium, concept and execution. In 1965 he published a folio of lino-prints, *Vaičaitis*, in a limited edition of thirty-five copies. Layout, design and printing were all done by the artist himself. The lino-prints are all on a single, erotic theme and although figurative are in semi-abstract style. The figures are reduced to mere symbols and their treatment is rather aggressive. Elwyn Lynn writes: 'It is a dominant rhythmical sense that Adolfas Vaičaitis enjoys in swaying, fluent, but emphatic forms. The simple lino-cut is used to produce something surreal, unearthly, a rhythmical proliferation of capricious forms; the lissom shapes join in a dance that has a slightly macabre note.'³⁶⁶

In earlier works Vaičaitis is linear; in this folio his lino-cuts *On the Stage* (ill. 219), *The Pleasure Seekers* (ill. 220) and *The Couple* (ill. 221) are based on a planar concept and echo the serpentine lines of Matisse. Vaičaitis varies slightly the rhythm, movement and tonality in each, but all have the same theme and the same colour red, perhaps intended to remind the viewer of frescoes in Roman bath-houses. He gradually adopted an abstract style and began to explore the possibilities of artistic accident. This is a central mark in his hundreds of miniature bookplates. All are abstract entities, carefully rendered in Indian ink and wash, and form rhythmic, uncluttered and elegant decorations. Executed with freedom, dexterity and subtlety, they are the result of long years of labour and discipline, e.g. *Ex Libris*, 1985. These miniature works are the latest in Vaičaitis's graphic oeuvre.

³⁶⁵ Alexis Rannit in A. Vaičaitis, *Seven Lithographs*, Germany, 1948, Preface.

³⁶⁶ Lynn in *Eleven Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, p. 7

Painting: From the early seventies Vaičaitis experimented with abstract art within the linear graphic tradition. At first he produced complex configurations in two unmodified colours, e.g. *Untitled*, 1972 (ill. 222), a composition balanced in form and colour. In later works he explores the subtle nuances of colour gradation with the bold lines forming images reminiscent of alphabets of ancient cultures, as in *Abstract*, 1974 (ill. 223).

Graphic artist, graphic designer and sculptor **Viktoras Simankevičius**⁴⁶⁷ has worked consistently as a part-time artist since arriving in Australia in 1949. He was born in Leningrad on 27 February, 1921. A few months later his parents Vincas and Virginija Simankevičius and their six children returned to Vilnius which at that time was occupied by Poland. Three years later, his father died, leaving a widow and seven children. The family received help from their grandparents and the children's education was financed by the Lithuanian Association.⁴⁶⁸ Viktoras studied at Vytautas the Great High School in Vilnius where he learned painting from the cubist painter Vytautas Kairiūkštis (1890-1961) and the expressionist Vladas Drėma, b. 1910. In 1940, after completing high school, he enrolled at the Vilnius Academy of Art where he studied painting under Justinas Vienožinskis, an impressionist, and drawing, watercolour and folk art under the enthusiastic painter, Adomas Galdikas, a Paris graduate. However, even at that time, Simankevičius was fascinated more by graphic art and its process and, whenever possible, he attended graphic art lectures and demonstrations by Telesforas Valius. In 1944 Simankevičius fled to Germany and in 1945 enrolled at the Münchener Kunstakademie. In 1947 he studied graphic art at L'École des Arts et Métiers in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, under the guidance of the artist whom he so greatly admired, Telesforas Valius. Although the main focus of the classes was lino and wood cutting, Simankevičius concentrated on drawing and design. In 1949 he migrated to Australia and, after serving his work contract at Seymour Army Barracks, settled in Melbourne. In 1951 he married Danutė Matulaitis. He worked for some time as a commercial artist at the Lamson Paragon Company; later, he had several other jobs, and from 1960 until his retirement in 1985, worked as a graphic designer at the Melbourne General Post Office. Simankevičius's main artistic activities are drawing, printmaking, miniature graphics and sculpture.

Drawing and Printmaking: He employs a variety of techniques, including monotypes, Indian ink washes, plain ink or pencil and mixed techniques. Most

⁴⁶⁷ Biog/cd details recorded during interview with the artist 29 Nov. 1987.

⁴⁶⁸ Lietuvių draugija. This was a welfare organization in independent Lithuania. Assistance was given to needy families living outside Lithuania.

of his drawings consist of sketch portraits in which he aims to capture the characteristic features of his subjects. His line is graceful and attenuated with an effortless flow and the sketches evocative and open to interpretation. One monotype is *Farmer*, 1960 (ill. 224), in which the simple line is accentuated with nuances of grey colour wash. The same skilful and spontaneous line is seen in *Self-Portrait*, 1972 (ill. 225). In more recent years he has produced a cycle of *Characters* where his reduction and simplification of uninterrupted, fragile line reaches its summit, e.g. *Character*, 1985 (ill. 226). Simankevičius illustrates his own Lithuanian translations of Old Persian, Old Greek and Hungarian poetry. With great patience and perseverance, he consults dictionaries to translate the texts and then illustrates the verses in spontaneous style. He has illustrated and published some twenty poems in strictly limited editions.

In illustrating the works of other authors, Simankevičius aims to capture the text's atmosphere. In 1959, he illustrated *Pasakėčios* (Fables) and in 1962, *Murklys*, both books for children by Antanas Giedrius.⁴⁶⁹ In 1976 and 1985 respectively, he provided layout and illustrations for *Žodžiai kaip salos* (Words Like Islands) and *Aidinčios upės* (The Echoing Rivers), both by poet Aldona Veščiušaitė.

His miniature graphic art includes *Ex Libris* plates and various logos which have been thus described: 'The artist is aiming for simplicity and economy of a creative statement.'⁴⁷⁰ In works of only a few centimetres square, Simankevičius selects appropriate elements and skilfully combines them into one meaningful unit. Examples are his logos for the Lithuanian Art Festival, the Australian Lithuanian Foundation and other organizations and cultural events.

Sculpture: Simankevičius' sculpture is a transference of his linear style to bronze and aluminium. Blocks of metal are engraved with sparse, swiftly executed lines which evoke feelings of an entrapped immobile life, e.g. *Sculpture*, 1974 (ill. 227). In 1972, an exhibition of Simankevičius's drawings and monoprints, in conjunction with the works of sculptor Jim Rowe, was held at the Warehouse Gallery in Melbourne.

Simankevičius is an active member of the Lithuanian community. He is well known for his elegant book illustrations, his numerous bookplate stencils and his logos for associations, conventions, sports carnivals and other events. Since 1956 he has been a member of the Australian Commercial and Industrial Artists Association from which he has received several Awards of Distinctive

⁴⁶⁹ See p. 162

⁴⁷⁰ *Ad Art*, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 4

Merit. Since 1971 he has belonged also to the Victorian Artists Society and participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Another artist who has been active over many years is painter, graphic artist and religious art restorer **Juozas Baukus**, known more recently as **Joseph Banks**.⁴⁷¹ He was born on 3 July 1909 at Sintautai in Lithuania. His mother, Agnė Banks, nee Krikštolaitytė, had recently returned to Lithuania from Scotland where Juozas's father had been killed in a coal mining accident. When Juozas was six months old, his mother died and he was brought up by his uncles Baukus. At the age of five he was kicked in the head by a horse and he underwent extensive treatment; as a result he did not complete his primary schooling until 1926. During this time he sculpted and painted small figures. An uncle, Juozas Dapkevičius, a religious art graduate from Warsaw, advised the boy's guardians to send him to the Trade School in Šiauliai. There Baukus studied religious art restoration, graduating in 1931. He then worked with his uncle restoring paintings and other decorations in churches. In 1941 he married and had two daughters. In 1944, believing it would soon be possible to return, Baukus left his family behind when he fled to the West. He was captured by the Germans but because of his poor health was classed as unsuitable for military service and was sent to work on a farm near Leipzig. After the war he lived in Augsburg refugee camp where he attended Vaclovas Ratas's art school, Studija. In 1946 Baukus enrolled at the Staatliche Akademie der bildenden Künste in Stuttgart where he studied painting until his migration to Australia in 1949. He carried out a two-year work contract as a telegraph linesman, and later settled in Melbourne where he worked as a house-painter. Between 1956 and 1959 he was a part-time student of painting at the School of Art at the Royal Melbourne Technical College. In 1963, Baukus became a member of the Victorian Art Society, and in 1984 of the Adelaide Royal Art Society and of the Contemporary Art Society of Victoria. He participated in annual exhibitions of the first. A rheumatic condition forced him to spend several winters in Brisbane where in 1972 he held a solo exhibition at the Geographic Institute Hall.

Although in his early years in Australia Baukus had painted realistic nostalgic landscapes to please the conservative members of the Lithuanian community, in the seventies he began to experiment with abstract art. He has said, 'Art consoles me in my loneliness and makes me feel worthwhile. Abstract art in particular gives me more freedom for personal expression.' In his abstract works, he depicts landscapes with great reverence and comments

⁴⁷¹ From about 1970 he began to call himself Joseph Banks and by this name signs many of his pictures. Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist Jan. 1989 and in subsequent telephone conversations.

also on contemporary issues. A typical abstract landscape is *Breeze of Spring*, 1981 (ill. 228), in which the exuberance of re-awakening Nature is conveyed. The painting is rendered in a free yet controlled manner. The sensitive handling of colour, especially in the sky, shows his reverence for 'Mother Sun' and convincingly evokes a feeling of a spring-borne breeze. The joyous atmosphere is reinforced by the lively rhythm and colours of the meadow. *Communication*, 1983 (ill. 229), is another abstract work and is endowed with textural richness. The artist explains the painting as his interpretation of satellite-linked communication. The sombre palette and decisive, heavy lines somewhat reminiscent of Hartung convey the fast pace of modern life and man's ability to harness the energy of the sun, yet at the same time show joylessness and portent. Baukus is a very private person, works in seclusion and participates in Lithuanian art exhibitions only when requested.

Dancer, painter and sculptor **Elena Kepalas**⁴⁷² has worked consistently and with ease across a range of artistic activities since her arrival in Australia. The elder of two daughters, she was born on 15 January 1920 in Vilnius, at that time under Polish occupation. She attended Vytautas the Great High School until 1939. Following the advice of her engineer father, she enrolled at the University of Vilnius to study law. At the same time, for pleasure, she studied dancing at the Academy of Dance and took part in performances given by the Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. In 1944 she fled Lithuania and stayed temporarily in Dillingen camp in Germany. There, in the refugee camp, she attended the art school set up by painter Antanas Rūkštelė. At the same time Kepalas extended her knowledge of dance by studying under Walter Klass and Mary Wigman. She participated in the first Lithuanian ballet performed in exile -- *Coppelia*, by Delibes -- in Augsburg in 1947 and also gave solo performances in Dillingen, Hanau, Menningen and in other large refugee camps.

In 1948 she arrived in Australia and settled in Melbourne. She fulfilled her two-year work contract as a nursing aide in a Melbourne psychiatric hospital. From 1950 she worked as a typist in various offices, in her free time studying expressive dance under Dana Nasvytis and painting under private tuition. In 1950 she gave her first Australian solo performance in the Melbourne Town Hall. Other solo dance performances followed: in 1951 at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music; in 1956 at the Melbourne Town Hall and at the Adelaide Freemason's Hall; and in 1957, again at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music where she was invited also to give a television performance. For her

⁴⁷² Biographical details recorded during interview with Bronė Mockunas 1 Jan. 1989 and given by the artist in letter dated 3 Dec. 1989.

appearances, she choreographed the dances and designed her costumes as well as the stage decor and lighting.

In the fifties, along with her dancing performances, she was active in the visual arts and participated in Lithuanian and Australian exhibitions with paintings and drawings. Kepalas believes that 'all arts intertwine.' In all her visual art-work, movement, rhythm and repetition are pronounced, and come primarily from her experience in dance. Her paintings and drawings are figurative and expressionistic, with bold colours applied flat in large planes. *Vida*, 1955 (ill. 230), is a portrait of a solemn, young woman; strong sweeping lines echo the rhythmic brushstrokes. Although the face is rendered with tonal subtlety and sensitivity, it blends with the boldly applied colour bands and planes of the rest of the picture and maintains the general spontaneity of the work. The artist, however, is concerned not only with the formal aspects of the portrait but also with the personality and mood of the sitter. The determination of the young refugee amid stark surroundings -- the bare light-bulb, the undefined, dark background -- is stated unequivocally in the glance and in the tightly pressed lips.

In other paintings, the elements of rhythm and repetition are even more explicit, e.g. *Crucifixion*, 1956 (ill. 231).⁴⁷³ The figural elements of the painting are rendered in arches, circles and semi-circles and create a dynamic atmosphere. The pictorial elements of the seemingly unpremeditated composition are subordinated into an expression of great agitation and are devoid of superfluous detail. Elena Kepalas regards sculpture as 'frozen dance' and many of her drawings are preliminary designs for her three-dimensional sculptures. *Portrait Study*, 1957 (ill. 232), is possibly one such preparatory sketch. In this drawing all the cubistic fragments are treated differently from those in her paintings. Here, the planes, which in paintings are flat, are modified with lines and shades which suggest possibilities for textural variation of sculptured surfaces.

Kepalas's paintings and drawings show the influence of Monet, Rouault and Picasso. Although Kepalas was well accepted in Australia, in 1957 she moved to Canada (and later to the USA) where she hoped to find greater opportunities to extend her creative endeavours, especially sculpture which she had not executed during her time in Australia.

Kepalas was an active member of the Lithuanian community and took part in art exhibitions. From 1953 to 1957 she was a member of the Contemporary Art Society of Victoria and took part in its group art shows.

⁴⁷³ While in Adelaide on a dance tour, Kepalas was requested to paint this picture.

Sculptor and painter **Gražina Firinauskas** (1918-1969) and her husband, **Jonas Firinauskas** (1915-1971), graphic artist, painter and stained-glass designer, were probably the most tragic of the Vanguard artists.⁴⁷⁴ Their lives were marred by unhappy domestic relationships and inability to adapt to life in a foreign land. This situation diminished their artistic activity and probably hastened their untimely deaths. Gražina Firinauskas was born into the family of Julius and Marija Butauskas on the Liubavas estate in the county of Marijampolė on 22 June 1918. Her father, a teacher, recognised her talent and encouraged her to study art. After completing high school, she enrolled at the School of Art in Kaunas to study sculpture under Juozas Zikaras and painting under Adomas Varnas, both realists. She graduated in 1941 with a major in sculpture and, against her parents' wishes, in the same year married fellow artist Jonas Firinauskas. Afterwards, she taught art at Vilkaviškis High School, and in 1942 a son Jonas, was born. In 1944 the family fled to the West, their longest stay being in the Ravensburg refugee camp in South Germany where Gražina taught art at the Lithuanian High School. In 1949 they migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. Both fulfilled their work contracts as dairy workers and later Gražina worked in a tailoring establishment. Two daughters were born in 1952 and 1955 respectively, but family life became unsettled and in 1959 she and her husband separated. In 1967 she moved to Adelaide and two years later died from cancer, leaving the children in the care of her 83-year-old mother.

Firinauskas was a moderately prolific artist. Her daughter Marija says, 'She was more of an artist than a mother.' Although trained in sculpture, she was prevented by lack of financial resources from working in that field and she diverted her artistic energies to painting. She received a number of private and ecclesiastical commissions but most of her work was done for her own satisfaction. Firinauskas's *oeuvre* falls into two groups: sculpture and painting.

Sculpture: It has not proved possible to trace many of these. One of her earliest is *Head*, circa 1955 (ill. 233), executed in plaster of Paris. This is a realistic work, carved with confidence and facility. The classic proportions and individual features of the face express restrained emotion. The lightly textured surface softens the work's classical severity. *Head* is in contrast to the statue of *Saint Kazimieras*, circa 1967 (ill. 234), which was commissioned by the Lithuanian Chapel in Adelaide; this is a stereotyped figure of a Lithuanian prince who was made a saint. The clarity of articulation of the robed figure, the

⁴⁷⁴ Information received from their daughters Marija and Julija, Fr. Juozas Petravis in Adelaide and numerous friends in Melbourne and Adelaide during interviews 15 Jan. 1989 and at other times.

restrained bearing and the smooth surface combine in the conventional image of a saint of the Renaissance period.

Painting: Firinauskas worked in various genres -- portraits, still life and landscapes -- in a diversity of realistic styles. In *Self-Portrait*, circa 1960 (ill. 235), she uses free brushstrokes in her colour application and goes beyond mere physical appearance to convey stress and anxiety. Her landscapes are closed compositions, rendered impressionistically in bright colours, e.g. *Landscape*, circa 1966 (ill. 236). Her still life paintings reflect academic discipline, e.g. *Flowers*, 1967 (ill. 237). This light composition with Baroque splendour shows careful attention to minute detail, a characteristic especially obvious in *The Flight to Egypt*, circa 1967 (ill. 238), a work commissioned for the Lithuanian Chapel in Adelaide. Here, Firinauskas reverts to Renaissance style in composition, in the architectonic arrangement of the garment folds and in the colours. In commissioned, smaller works she displays stylisation and decorativeness, e.g. *Jūratė*, circa 1956 (ill. 239). This tondo wood plaque is painted on a traditional Lithuanian theme in a highly simplified manner. The wide diversity of her work suggests that Firinauskas probably never found her own style in painting and remained in the process of searching. She participated in Lithuanian and Australian art exhibitions only during her early years in Australia. Within the Lithuanian community, however, especially among the more conservative, her art remains popular.

Jonas Firinauskas (1915-1971) was born to Lithuanian refugee parents in Russia on 22 May, 1915. After World War I his parents returned to Lithuania and in about 1940 Jonas graduated, with a graphic art major, from the Art School in Kaunas. Soon after graduation he married fellow artist, sculptor Gražina Butauskaitė. Afterwards, while his wife taught art, he painted and illustrated books for various publishing houses in Kaunas. In 1944, the couple fled to the West with their two year-old son, Jonas. During their stay in Ravensburg refugee camp, he designed and illustrated Lithuanian books and other art publications. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia. At the completion of his work contract, he and his family settled in Melbourne where two daughters were born. Firinauskas found great difficulty in adjusting to life in his adopted country. In 1959, his marriage broke down. According to acquaintances, feelings of rejection led him to alcoholism, violence and eventually to imprisonment.

During his early years in Melbourne, he met an agent for ecclesiastical art who considered his academic painting and drawing styles suitable for his

conservative clients. Firinauskas was commissioned to prepare designs for stained-glass windows and to paint figures for large-scale pictures.⁴⁷⁵ It is thought that many of his designs were used in Tasmanian churches and halls, but this is difficult to validate as his name did not appear on the final products. One of the few known examples of his work is a small bookplate executed in Germany, *Ex Libris*, circa 1945 (ill. 240). It shows the precision and facility of a skilled hand and, in its compact composition, clarity of image and lettering, follows faithfully the academic school. In Australia, Firinauskas's commissions were limited strictly in both theme and style. Some surviving pictures of saints, presumably sketches for larger paintings, show him as a staunch follower of the Renaissance Baroque School, e.g. *Christ* (ill. 241) and *Devil* (ill. 242) both circa 1953-55. In both, subjects are realistically rendered, with conventional attributes and in dark brown tones.

According to many of his countrymen, in Lithuania Jonas Firinauskas had been convivial and a fine musician able to play many instruments. In Australia, in his unhappiness, he distanced himself from the Lithuanian community and, as far as is known, neither participated in art exhibitions nor belonged to societies or groups. He died a desolate and lonely man, but the exact circumstances of his death are unknown.

DELAYED ARTISTS

In Melbourne, there are three Lithuanian artists in this group: painter Adomas Vingis (1917-1980), sculptor Adolfas Jankus, b. 1924 and weaver Alė Liubinas, b. 1931. All were inclined towards artistic expression from early years. Neither Vingis nor Jankus completed formal art training although both received some art tuition at various times. For many years after their arrival in Australia, their modesty and lack of self-confidence caused them to delay artistic involvement and prevented them from exhibiting publicly.

It is interesting to note the quite different stimuli that prompted the beginnings of the men's artistic activities: for Vingis, the catalyst was contemporary Japanese art; Jankus was motivated by the welding process by which he earned his living. Although the work of these two artists varied in media and style, both strove for contemporary forms of artistic expression. For Liubinas nostalgia and compassion were forces which motivated her interests in weaving and ceramics.

⁴⁷⁵ *Metrašiai*, Vol. 1, p. 239

Painter, graphic artist and scenographer **Adomas Vingis** (1917-1980)⁴⁷⁶ was born on 18 August 1917, the youngest of fifteen children in a farming family in Žemaičiu, Naujamiestis. In 1937 he completed study at Šviekniai High School where he had become known as a draftsman and decorator, skilled at meeting the school's scenographic needs. In 1938 he enrolled at the Kaunas Military Academy in order to gain free tertiary education. When the Academy was taken over by the Soviets in 1940, Vingis's artistic talent was used to change and falsify old photographs, e.g. he was forced to insert the head of Stalin in place of another. In 1941, during the German occupation, Vingis became a teacher at a primary school in Naumiestis. In 1942 he married a teaching colleague, Aleksandra Balkauskaitė. As well as teaching, Vingis painted stage sets and designed programmes, catalogues and invitations for various school performances. In 1944 with his wife and baby daughter Laima, Vingis escaped to Reutlingen in southern Germany. From 1946 to 1948 he studied architecture at the Stuttgart Technische Hochschule and, when the birth of a second daughter, Kristina, necessitated his return to work, took a job in Reutlingen as a signwriter and billboard designer with a small German commercial art firm.

In 1951 Vingis and his family migrated to Australia. He completed a two-year work contract at a Melbourne cement factory; his wife worked at a textile factory. Later, Vingis was employed as a spray painter at a Fitzroy garage. At that time, safety precautions were not used and, later, Vingis developed skin and heart ailments which affected him seriously.

From the time of his arrival in Australia, Vingis joined in the cultural life of the Lithuanian community. For some ten years he worked on various committees, often as president, and was active in fund-raising for the purchase of two Lithuanian community houses, as well as in voluntary work on their upgrading and decoration. The Lithuanian Community House in North Melbourne contains many examples of his work including paintings measuring up to five metres in length and folk-art decorative wall patterns.

In 1958 his visit to the Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition in Melbourne re-awakened his interest in art. He said that he immediately felt a 'great affinity' with Japanese abstract representation. He greatly admired its coolness, elegance and order of composition and these qualities were later embodied in his own paintings. He began to correspond with art galleries in Japan and received a number of their publications. At the same time he increased his reading of modern art books. In 1962, at the age of forty-five, Vingis enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study commercial art but left after two semesters as he found the course 'too stale'.

⁴⁷⁶ Biog/ed details recorded in interviews with the artist 1976; with his widow Aleksandra 30 Jan. 1988; with his daughter Kristina 20 Jan. 1988; and with Bronius Straukas, Vladas Dumčius, Vytautas Didelis and many others at various times 1986-1990.

He was opposed to copying and was drawn to abstract art mostly because 'it had no rules'.

The Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition heightened his concern for the art situation in occupied Lithuania. He compared the freedom of expression and fantasy of Japanese graphic art with the stiffness and limitations of Socialist Realism enforced in Soviet Lithuania. He longed to open the Iron Curtain to let in new ideas and believed that 'national art must be reinforced by international art.' He managed to send art books and prints to Lithuania, even though officially this was prohibited by the Soviet authorities and was against the policy of the conservative section of the Lithuanian community in Australia.

Other contributions by Vingis to Lithuanian cultural activities include scenography and design and preparation of posters, invitations and programmes. To facilitate this task he constructed a simple printing press which he improved over time.

In 1964 his first solo exhibition of prints and drawings was held at the Toorak Gallery. Adolfas Vaičiaitis writes, 'Vingis ... tries to find the key of simplicity and Japanese precision ... he moderately plays with colour and finds contentment in the coalescence of form and accident.'⁴⁷⁷ At first, Vingis's lack of a formal art education and his poor command of English inhibited him and undermined his confidence to fraternise with the wider Australian art community. Within Lithuanian circles, however, he was sociable and included among his close friends were Lithuanian artists Teisutis Zikaras, Viktoras Simankevičius, Sigitas Gabrie and Adolfas Vaičiaitis. Later, increasing sales of his work and recognition by professional artists gave him greater confidence. In 1970 he and his wife separated and he became 'totally pre-occupied with art.' He experimented constantly with his printing machine using a range of media and techniques and worked concurrently in graphics and painting.

Vingis's work can be divided into graphic art and painting:

Graphic Art: Only one example of his early graphic work remains: *Inside the Past*, circa 1962 (ill. 243). The decisive, tense and black and white contrasts are reminiscent of paintings by the artist Hans Hartung. Over time, Vingis's manipulation of pictorial elements attained a looser and more flowing expression. When, in 1980, the Lithuanian community commemorated the bicentenary of the death of Kristijonas Donelaitis, the 18th-century poet who wrote the epic poem, *Metai* (The Seasons), Vingis paid tribute by painting an interpretative series depicting the changing seasons. Some are fragments of geometric forms on tonal backgrounds, e.g. *Autumn*, 1980 (ill. 244). Here the

⁴⁷⁷ Adolfas Vaičiaitis, *Mūsų Pastogė*, 7 Dec. 1964.

artist evokes the mood of autumn by colours and shapes which allude to winds and falling leaves. In other graphic works, he is mainly linear as in *Winter*, 1980 (ill. 245). The white background recalls snow and the straight, blue lines suggest the stillness of ice. In *Sun*, 1974 (ill. 246) he pays homage to the sun.

Painting: From 1963 to 1965 Vingis experimented with abstract expressionism, working in enamel which he had come to know so well during his years as a spray-painter. He manipulated its volatile properties with dexterity and made full use of accident. His work from this period is energetic and spontaneous, e.g. *Abstract in Blue*, circa 1965 (ill. 247).⁴⁷⁸ Yet, probably, his over-use of accidental spills, blots and runs resulted in his style becoming de-personalised. At this time in Melbourne *avant-garde* art focused on hard-edge and colour painting in all its variations. Vingis was becoming familiar with contemporary Japanese art and technique, using the same enamel lacquers he had earlier used in his random abstract works. He now found the style which was to remain his principal mode of expression: modulated constructivism incorporating Japanese austerity and Western simplification and minimalism. His pictures acquired elegance by his use of cool, broad planes and carefully planned composition. He remained a lyrical constructivist retaining referential points to visible reality but with hints of symbolism, as in *Morning Comes Slowly*, 1967 (ill. 248). This has hard-edge elements in the lateral panels between which the rising sun appears. The planes are sprayed with flat, muted acrylic, sparingly emphasised with brighter bands or triangles.

Such constructional works are far from spontaneous and their composition has been carefully considered in order to eliminate non-essential details and to affirm the characteristic and significant. In preparation for the final product, Vingis often experimented with coloured paper shapes and their different relationships. He generally employed an air-brushing technique, but in later life used a brush and was careful to hide the brush strokes. He was never interested in the painterly surface but rather in the relationship of colour and form. He obtained vivid rhythm by fragmentation of colour bands, as in *Sun Breaks on the Earth*, circa 1968 (ill. 249). Between the large, dark horizontal planes are inserted small, irregularly shaped, vertical segments which intensify the splitting action of the yellow-red bands on the right. Vingis's concern is for the rhythms of colour rather than for the darkness descending from the top of the painting.

Painter Charles William Bush wrote in 1980 of Vingis's work in general: 'The rhythms, shapes, colours and lines Adomas Vingis employs to achieve his very subtle elegance work for me and work on me, and the works

⁴⁷⁸ Date marked on painting is the year in which it was presented as a gift.

... go on intriguing me and yielding new facets over the years.⁴⁷⁹ Vingis experimented with air-brushing and spraying techniques in his desire to achieve new effects. In *L'Eglise*, 1968 (ill. 250), he modulates the planes by superimposing them and in this way obtains a more intense and emotional mood. Here the amorphous element overpowers the hard-edge lines of the semi-abstract image of the hill and the church spire.

The most typical aspect of Vingis's *oeuvre* is the calm serenity of his later work, e.g. *Far Side of a Landscape*, 1979 (ill. 251) and *Keep Sunset with You*, 1980 (ill. 252). Such pictures show the selectiveness, sobriety and precision common to the Japanese masters, Tajika Hirojuki, Takagi Shiro and Yoshuda Toshi. In *Far Side of a Landscape* the variously shaped planes relate harmoniously to each other and have reference to rocks and water. The limited use of muted colour is influenced by the subtle colours of the Australian landscape. By minimal pictorial means, Vingis achieves still but lyrical images of the Australian coastline. In 1980 Vingis used Sydney as the theme for several paintings. *Homage to Sydney*, 1980 (ill. 253), is executed in minimalist and hard-edge manner with the addition of the artist's personal interpretation. The straight panel at the left contains a symbolic Harbour Bridge with circular, rhythmic lines between the two panels referring to the sails of the Opera House. The city's fast pace and fragility find pictorial equivalents in small, repeated fragments superimposed on the vast calm of the sea. Here, as in many of his other paintings, Vingis combines different styles to suit his purpose.

His personality is reflected best in paintings such as *Sailing*, 1979 (ill. 254). Here the fragmented and reconstructed image of the sailboat is rendered in monochromatic blue, its subtlety an analogy with musical adagio. The varied influences of Lithuanian painter Čiurlionis and Japanese artist Yoshida Toshi are combined in the painting's lyrical and poetic spirit, yet the manner in which it is rendered has its roots in a constructivist, cubist style. Vingis indicates the metaphysical dimension by placing the boat, the sea and the sky in the same all-embracing blue, emphasising the unity of the elements. The juxtaposition of white and black sails most likely symbolises life and death.

In 1980, following two successful exhibitions of prints organised by the Lithuanian communities in Adelaide and Sydney, Vingis agreed to hold his first exhibition for the Australian public at the Leveson Gallery in Melbourne and the date was set for 5 October. However, he died suddenly from a heart attack on 26 September. The exhibition became both a retrospective and posthumous showing of his work.

⁴⁷⁹ Charles W. Bush, in Catalogue of Vingis's exhibition, Leveson Gallery, 1980.

Sculptor **Adolfas Jankus**⁴⁸⁰ was born, one of six children, at Skabeikiai in the Lithuanian district of Papilė on 24 May 1924. In 1941 he graduated from the Telšiai Trade School where he had learned metal-working. In 1942 he continued his studies at Vilnius Technical College where his best subjects were drafting and drawing. While living in Vilnius he regularly visited the theatre where he was inspired by both the performances and the stage settings. In 1944 Jankus fled to the West and spent four years in the Kempten refugee camp in Bavaria. There, several Lithuanian professors, among them Steponas Kolupaila, Jonas Šimoliūnas, Romualdas Zaluba, and other engineering and architecture graduates organised an advanced technical course, the curriculum and examinations of which were linked to Munich Technical College. Jankus graduated from the course in 1948, having particularly enjoyed the lectures in architecture and history of art given by Vytautas Česnulis. His study during the course of the sculptures by Russian constructivist Vladimir Tatlin brought Jankus to the realisation that the assemblage of such mundane components as untreated wood, pieces of metal and broken glass could be regarded as serious art.

In 1948 Jankus migrated to Australia and for the next two years worked as a timber-cutter in Victoria. Afterwards he worked at various jobs, the longest being seventeen years as a designer in the experimental engineering department of General Motors Holden. During this time, his daily work involved welding and manipulating mechanical parts which sometimes had aesthetically pleasing forms and reminded Jankus of Tatlin's sculptures. Encouraged by his wife,⁴⁸¹ he began to weld fantasy pieces for enjoyment. When in the sixties abstract sculpture began to receive wider recognition in Melbourne, it was an indirect stimulus for Jankus to continue. The visit to Australia by American sculptor Richard Stankiewicz strengthened Jankus's resolve to work in rough, untreated metal, often referred to as 'junk sculpture.' In *The Fountain*, 1971 (ill. 255), the restrained, almost classical composition of non-representational elements has a rustic beauty enhanced by running water. In 1973, encouraged by his success in selling his work, Jankus became a free-lance artist.

Many of his works are welded open sculptures in abstract or semi-abstract style. Aesthetic tension is gained from the interplay of volume with the minimum of mass. Most have symbolic connotations. His work falls into two groups: relief-like, wall-mounted structures and three-dimensional, free-standing sculptures.

Relief sculptures: These are mostly intended as chamber pieces, e.g. *Galaxy*, 1970 (ill. 256) and *Comet*, 1973 (ill. 257). Both are slender,

⁴⁸⁰ Biogged details recorded in interview with the artist Dec. 1988.

⁴⁸¹ Formerly Vita Tuskenytė, a Lithuanian whom he married in 1957.

decorative structures alluding to harmonious cosmic movement and emphasising permanency, and there is a certain playfulness in their construction.

Free-standing sculptures: Here, Jankus often refers metaphorically to images from his childhood, e.g. *Grain*, 1974 (ill. 258). The slender shaft bearing ears of rye is symbolically and stylistically presented and conveys a lyrical feeling. In contrast is *The First Furrow*, 1973 (ill. 259), where the solemn and pensive mood of the sculpture approaches the ritualistic and sacrificial. Jankus recreates from the farming cycle an important moment which, through the centuries in Lithuania, has been steeped in ceremonial ritual. At this moment the humble farmer becomes a creator able to change barren soil into fertile land. The simple, bent planes of *The First Furrow* are painted so that dark green merges into black and are welded together in a representation of the ploughing act when the soil is slowly opened and falls into rich, black clods, disclosing the bidden secrets of fecundity. In his *oeuvre* a large group of works is designed for outdoor enjoyment, e.g. *Fountain*, 1971. These works are constructed of welded iron or steel geometric pieces with the emphasis on formal architectonic variations.

The artistic activities of Alė Liubinas⁴⁸² were delayed largely because of family commitments. She was born Alė Rubaževičiūtė on the Smilgiai estate in Lithuania on 21 January 1931. In 1944 her family fled from Lithuania to Germany where, after the war, they were accommodated at a refugee camp in Greven. There she continued her studies at the Lithuanian High School, completing her secondary education in 1949. In the same year the family migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. In 1951, after serving her work contract in hospitals and tailoring establishments she attended drawing classes at the Melbourne Museum under the guidance of William Dargie. In 1953 she married Algirdas Liubinas who graduated later that year as a telecommunications engineer. Between 1955 and 1962 she bore four sons, all of whom have entered professions.

In 1964 Liubinas enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study fashion design and pattern-making. From her graduation in 1967 she worked for nine years as a fashion designer. From 1978 to 1982 she studied various aspects of wool production: growing, dyeing, spinning and weaving at the Melbourne College of Textiles. In 1982 she enrolled as a part-

⁴⁸² Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist Jan. 1989 and letter dated 20 Jul. 1992.

time student at the Phillip Institute of Technology in Melbourne, to study Fine Arts and in 1987 received a diploma with a major in ceramics.

From 1976 to 1982 Liubinas was an art and craft tutor at the Footscray Art Centre and at art classes organized by the Sunshine Council and the Spinners and Weavers Guild. Since 1983 she has conducted workshops in spinning, weaving and batik egg-decorating for the Arts and Crafts Council. Even though she practises many forms of artistic expression she says that weaving is her favourite. Some of her work faithfully follows tradition, e.g. *National Costume*, 1982 (ill. 260). In other pieces she combines her knowledge of and expertise in traditional weaving with her more recently acquired scientific skills to produce articles using new, unconventional techniques and materials. Some of her woven pieces such as sashes, serviettes and table runners incorporate Lithuanian patterns, but most of her work is individualised expression showing only traces of ethnicity. The majority of her woven pieces have a rustic feeling, e.g. *My Home*, 1983 (ill. 261). Here, with simple, parallel lines spotlit with colour she reconstructs her childhood home, evoking the tranquillity of rural life.

Liubinas's ceramics consist of vases and vessels of various sizes, from miniature items to robust garden pots. All bear the mark of simplicity and elegance, their forms severe yet refined and their only decoration a sombre, matt glaze, e.g. *Black Pot*, 1985 (ill. 261). She sometimes expresses through her art her strong views on life, environment and politics, e.g. *Listen*, 1986 (ill. 263). This is presented as an installation or a variation of conceptual art⁴⁸³ and consists of sand, porcelain pots and various fired terra-cotta items including a skeleton. In the accompanying text the artist contemplates the transience of our culture.

Liubinas exhibits her woven articles in international ethnic exhibitions and during Lithuanian Days as well as at Australian festivals and craft shows.

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS: YOUNG ARRIVALS

In Melbourne there have been five artists who arrived in Australia as babies or young children, having been exposed to some extent to the trauma of war or its aftermath. Their art in many ways may be likened to a bridge between first-generation artists and artists of the second-generation born in Australia. There are strong links with Lithuanian folk art and Lithuanian traditions: Elena Zdanė, for example, uses folk-art patterns in her stained-glass work; sculptures by

⁴⁸³ The term used for an art form in which the idea is more important than the finished work. It can take many forms, and is often accompanied by lengthy text explaining the artist's intention.

Dalia Antanaitis have a Lithuanian ethos and ties with Lithuanian mythology; Irena Sibley uses Lithuanian figurative imagery in her children's book illustrations.

Painter and stained-glass artist **Elena Zdanė**,⁴⁸⁴ the eldest child of Kazys and Elena Zdanavičius, was born in Kaunas in 1938. In 1941, her lawyer father, with his wife and four children, moved to Germany and in 1949 migrated to Australia where they settled in Geelong, Victoria. There, Elena attended Sacred Heart College and later studied commercial art at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, graduating in 1965. In 1968 she married Andrius Kasperišnas and the task of caring for their three children curtailed her artistic activity for almost twenty years. Her early paintings display a strong ornamental impulse and an obvious desire to bring a fairytale world to her environment. Her work is formal, abstract configurations or geometric, semi-abstract landscapes, e.g. *Fruit Trees*, 1966 (ill. 264). She uses strong, primary colours, flatly applied.

In the eighties she returned to art and has broadened her artistic activities to include painting, book illustration and stained-glass work. In 1984 she illustrated and published the poem, *Jūratė ir Kastytis*, (ill. 265) written by Maironis and based on the Lithuanian legend of the sea-goddess Jūratė and the fisherman Kastytis. The publication is in both Lithuanian and English, but the English version is very much abridged. Her illustrations are representational, decorative and somewhat influenced by Art Nouveau. Zdanė's favourite art form is stained-glass for which she has not had formal training. Her inspiration comes from the windows of old houses which, she says, 'evoke legendary life.' Her imagery draws on Lithuanian folk art and folklore. *Front Door*, 1984 (ill. 266), consists of a stylised folk-art element, a tulip, the shapes and proportions of which are varied to fit the six individual panels. To enhance the formal character of the door she uses symmetry, rhythm and repetition.

Verandah Door, 1985 (ill. 267), is a triptych, with the panels linked by the elements of the same landscape: horizon, path and river. The pictorial components are manipulated in a soft, informal manner, using serpentine lines and varying the width of the colour bands to achieve a relaxed and inviting atmosphere. Smaller examples of her stained-glass work depict legendary characters and are used in the same way as paintings to decorate walls. During the sixties and in the eighties Zdanė participated in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions.

⁴⁸⁴ The artist uses a shortened form of the family surname. Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 9 Nov. 1988.

Graphic artist, author and teacher Irena Sibley⁴⁸⁵ was born, the elder of two children, to Adelė and Zenonas Pauliukonis in Vilkaviškis, Lithuania on 16 June 1944. Soon afterwards, her parents fled to the West with their newly born daughter and stayed at the Freiburg refugee camp where Irena attended the Lithuanian kindergarten. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia and settled in the Sydney suburb of Cabramatta which was by then already becoming densely populated by European migrants. Irena's parents were active members of the Lithuanian community and the first Cabramatta Lithuanian weekend school was conducted in their garage. Her father was a self-taught composer of popular songs and marches and had a fine appreciation of poetry. He subscribed to richly illustrated Lithuanian childrens books from the USA, and these were enjoyed by both children. Her mother loved to sing sad Lithuanian songs which Irena says made her weep, while her grandmother was a teller of fairytales.

From 1956 to 1959 Irena attended Liverpool High School, where her favourite subjects were Art, English and History. At school Irena was good at writing 'compositions' and probably songs and fairytales helped to stimulate her imagination. In 1959 she enrolled at the National Art School in Sydney and in 1964 was awarded a diploma in painting and sculpture. In 1965 she married painter Andrew Sibley and they moved to Melbourne where they have raised two sons: Benedict, born in 1969 and Jonathan, born in 1975. In 1967 Irena Sibley established an art department at Xavier Preparatory School and taught there intermittently for twelve years. In 1978 she attended classes in philosophy and literature at Deakin University, and in the following year made an art study tour to the USA.

Although trained in painting and sculpture, Sibley has concentrated on graphic art, due no doubt to her talent and interest in writing, but also probably to her memories of the Lithuanian literature of her childhood. Her graphic work can be divided into pure and applied graphic art. In both, her subject matter is taken from fairytales and the fantasy world of childhood and is rendered in simple, almost primitive, style. In 1979 Sibley produced her first handwritten and handprinted, large-size (one metre in height) book for children, *Rainbow* (ills. 268 and 269).⁴⁸⁶ The visual representation is clear and attractive; the text is informative and appealing to children. The woodcut illustrations, some coloured in clear, primary hues, are simplified, realistic figures, in the style of folklorist images. Her composition is tight and the line of her woodcuts is strong and straight, showing its marked influence of Lithuanian children's illustrators such as Domicelė Tarabildienė, b. 1912 (see ill. 26) and Vlada Stančikaitė, b. 1911. Sibley's *Rainbow* text was inspired by the colourful rag-dolls of Lithuania and

⁴⁸⁵ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist Nov. 1988.

⁴⁸⁶ *Rainbow*, by Irena Sibley, Gryphon Books, Melbourne, 1980.

in straightforward English she transfers the problems faced by migrant children to her rag-doll characters.

In more recent books for children there is less ethnic specificity, and the basic artistic style is becoming more flowing and free. *When the Sun Took the Colour Away* was published in 1982; *The Other Tensy* in 1985; *William the Wizard who Wasn't* in 1986; *The Calming of Harry* in 1987; and *When Herb's Mess Grew* in 1990. Sibley contributes to the periodical *Australian Short Stories* as both writer and illustrator, and also illustrates textbooks, alphabet books and books by other authors. Among the last are *The Last Voyage of the Arminia* by Lynne Duncan and *The Trouble with Peggy*, by Mary Small. Since 1980 Sibley has participated in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions.

The elder daughter of Antanas and Olga Adamkevičius, painter and art teacher **Undinė Padoms (1947-1983)**⁴⁸⁷ was born at the Ingolstadt refugee camp in Germany on 31 December 1947. In 1949 the family arrived in Australia and settled in Melbourne where Undinė attended Santa Maria College in Northcote until 1964. From early childhood she had been good at drawing and painting, and in Australia her early artistic efforts brightened the lives of her hard-working parents: her father, a civil engineer who worked with the Melbourne City Council, and her mother who worked all her life at odd jobs. In 1968 Undinė graduated from the Preston Institute of Technology where she studied painting and sculpture. After graduation she painted abstract pictures, occasionally producing expressionist landscapes. In 1969 she married Karl Padoms, a Latvian engineer and for some years worked as a relief art teacher at various Melbourne high schools. Her abstract work in oil was often executed by batik process and is made up of amorphous, non-representational shapes. Meandering, convoluted lines form narrow, winding bands, the surfaces of which are fractured into indefinite shapes, as in *Untitled I*, circa 1970 (ill. 270). Padoms' colour scale is restricted to muddy browns and muted greens, sometimes scattered with lines of white dots. The atmosphere of her work tends to be claustrophobic and introverted, as in *Untitled II*, circa 1975 (ill. 271). There are some links with the work of Pollock of the thirties, the main difference being that Padoms's work is much more intimate and closed to outside scrutiny and reflects a depressed and complex psychological world.

Undinė Padoms participated in several art exhibitions and in 1969 she and Adomas Vingis held a combined art showing at the Lithuanian House in Melbourne. In 1970 she was awarded first prize in the Young Lithuanian Artists

⁴⁸⁷ Bio/ed details given by Padoms' sister Jūratė Skimbiarauskas 1 Dec. 1988.

section at the Lithuanian Days exhibition. In 1981 her parents died and later in the year she separated from her husband. She committed suicide in 1983.

Dalia Antanaitis⁴⁸⁸ is a sculptor and painter who was born on 5 May 1949 in the Hanau refugee camp in Germany. Her father, Stasys Statkus, was a surgeon and her mother Halina an obstetrician. They migrated to Australia in 1950 and settled in Melbourne. Both parents were active in Lithuanian cultural life and encouraged their three children to be involved. At primary and secondary schools Dalia won several prizes in drawing competitions arranged by the *Sun* newspaper. She also attended the Lithuanian Catholic Weekend School, participated in the Lithuanian theatre and sporting, Scouts and folk-dance activities. Later she organised and taught a children's dance group -- Gintariukai -- for fourteen years. Her father, while working at a factory, completed his Australian medical studies and gained Australian medical practitioner status in 1960. In 1969 Dalia enrolled at Teachers College and in the same year married Henrikas Antanaitis, a psychologist. They have three sons. In 1988 she enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study art and in 1991 was awarded a Fine Arts Degree, having majored in sculpture.

Antanaitis's work is elegant and refined, premeditated rather than spontaneous. She considers carefully the most appropriate medium and form in which to embody her ideas before beginning a work. In sculpture, which is mostly abstract collage, her main concern is celebration of the elements and objects of Nature which, despite their static appearance, she believes to be alive. In *Rebirth I*, 1990 (ill. 272), she pays respect to a tree relic by elevating a piece of driftwood on three mirrored stalks, which, she says, serves as a metaphor for water and sky, elements with which the living tree would have communicated. Antanaitis's close association with the Lithuanian community and culture is often a catalyst for her imagination. *Fragments of Čiurlionis*, 1990 (ill. 273), a prize-winning work at the Lithuanian Days Exhibition in Melbourne, depicts the complexity of Čiurlionis, representing him as painter, graphic artist, composer and musicologist. The shattered glass below symbolises his broken aspirations.

Antanaitis's personal experiences are given symbolic and abstract form in *My Anguish 2*, 1989 (ill. 274). This was made in memory of her father's death in 1988. Her aching heart is represented by a burst circle entangled with barbed wire. In painting, her symbolism is more explicit, e.g. *Dream Unfulfilled in the Lucky Country*, 1989 (ill. 275). Here she represents her father's experiences and impressions on his arrival in Australia. She juxtaposes

⁴⁸⁸ Biog/cd details recorded during interview with the artist 3 Mar. 1990.

two episodes of his life: in the upper section of the painting, against the background of a Lithuanian map, her father is performing a surgical operation; the lower section represents his first impressions of Australia: an arid and parched land with dead trees, but a land which refugees might bring to life. She has chosen this symbolic way to convey her father's life aspirations.

Jonas Balsaitis⁴⁸⁹ is a painter, graphic artist, film-maker and art teacher. He has achieved recognition as an artist who 'is basically interested in the ways in which information is conveyed by technological means.'⁴⁹⁰ He was born in 1948 in a refugee camp in Germany. When he was a year old, his parents migrated to Australia with him and his two older half-sisters. They went to live in Melbourne and soon afterwards his father deserted the family. Balsaitis has only a dim recollection of his father, besides the bitterness felt by his mother. This may be why he has learned to hide his feelings and avoid emotional exposure in his paintings.

Jonas attended Warrandyte Primary School and says he has lasting memories of finger-painting and toothbrush spraying activities. After completing his secondary education at Collingwood High School, he enrolled at the Preston Institute of Technology to study art and graduated in 1967. In the following year he studied at the Prahan Technical College and in 1969 at the National Gallery School of Art. From 1970 he has been a regular visiting lecturer at art tutorials and seminars and a teacher of drawing at Victorian and NSW colleges. In 1979 he received a travelling grant from the Visual Arts Board and this enabled him to visit the USA where, he says, he 'felt absolutely at home.'

Balsaitis's *oeuvre* consists of painting, graphics and film, all interrelated in imagery and pictorial ideas. His early paintings of the seventies and his films are entirely abstract and objective, and reflect his intention to show nothing of himself. His later works however contain subjective notions and, as well as being highly aesthetic, communicate meaning to a wider audience.

Paintings: Balsaitis produces abstract, geometric paintings, often in series, on a large scale, generally five to seven feet in height and width. Notwithstanding their size, they are painstakingly planned and executed, the artist doing many preliminary sketches and elaborating until they match his intention. Art critic Patrick McCaughey writes of Balsaitis's pictures:

⁴⁸⁹ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 4 Mar. 1990.

⁴⁹⁰ Gary Catalano, 'Art Review', *Age*, Melbourne, 22 Aug. 1990.

... At a blow they show how lazy Australian taste is, content to expatiate on past achievement rather than seek out the unfamiliar ... Balsaitis works the paintings so fully that he appears everywhere in possession of his own work. Nothing looks unconsidered and nothing looks taken over uncritically.⁴⁹¹

Although some critics say that the imagery of Balsaitis's paintings stems from mechanical, mathematical and geometric sources, it is more likely, often, that their origins lie in microscopic views of metals and magnetic fields. His paintings are structured from many rhythmically organised facets, differing only slightly from each other. However, when the separate segments of each painting form a whole and the work is considered as a unit it has an optical and psychological impact on the viewer. Examples of such works are *Metron 1* (ill. 276) and *Metron 2* (ill. 277), both 1972. Primarily, these are linear and precise but Balsaitis's use of colour animates them in a very special way.

Balsaitis has been influenced by Op Art, by the minimalists and by colour paintings, yet his use of colour does not belong to any of these styles. He uses gradation, chromaticism and tonal variation in a lyrical, subtle manner that meets the eye in a soothing, placating way and, he says, is intended more to evoke individual emotion than to overpower by strong statement. By the late seventies, Balsaitis's paintings became more complex. He began to construct paintings of several planes of imagery, a technique most probably transferred from film superimposition techniques. His handling of colour achieved an emotional quality. Art critic Alan McCulloch writes: 'Balsaitis is a colourist whose sensuous humanism transcends the boundaries of geometry and endows his work with mystery ... for all their modernist overtones, the ... paintings are as inscrutable as the Islamic alphabet and look as old as the seven days of the week.'⁴⁹²

There is much truth in the above critique. Balsaitis's paintings are powerful, basic and as irrevocable as the days of the week. They transcend the boundaries of geometry and have an air of mystery; but they are also as intelligible to many as the Islamic alphabet is to those who have taken the time and trouble to learn it. The complexity of his paintings arises because of his method of executing his multi-planar works. It seems that he follows a definite pattern: first, the basic design is executed; on this is superimposed a second, usually abstract, imagery; both are then painted over with a third layer. An example is *City A Time*, 1982 (ill. 278). In the centre of the basic plane are brick-like structures and a radiating sun. The second plane consists of superimposed centrifugal black lines and bird-like shapes. A further superimposition of a fractured, white grid completes the picture. In *City C*

⁴⁹¹ Patrick McCaughey, *Age*, Melbourne, 15 Mar. 1972.

⁴⁹² McCulloch, *Herald*, Melbourne, 16 Nov. 1978.

Time, 1982 (ill. 279), from the same series, Balsaitis uses the same method, the main difference being that the images of the first two planes are obscured much more by the third. The whole picture has only a few identifiable objects-- parts of walls and buildings -- and there is more agitation, faster movement and more fracturing of lines than in *City A Time*. All this produces a seemingly more intangible, chaotic scene. Whatever the artist's intention, on close examination the first impression of chaos gives way to a highly organised scheme adhering to the general rhythm of the picture surface and the rules of symmetry. Both 'city' pictures are emotionally charged and their soft colours combine with staccato lines to create an atmosphere of a vivid (as in *City A Time*) or a lyrical (as in *City C Time*) world.

Robot Digit Freak, 1984 (ill. 280), sub-titled 'Japanese Robot Going Grrr', has been executed by the same multi-planary method. The basic robot image is submerged into the first plane and superimposed by two or three centrifugal planes. In this picture, political overtones are evident, as they are also in the *Rise Sing-Sun*, 1985 (ill. 281). Here, the artist shows an unexpected return to conventional imagery with obvious reference to seascape. Balsaitis says that he intends a political message, warning of the dangers of uranium mining and use in his depiction of a splitting Japanese flag and allusion to pollution of the earth's water and atmosphere. Such works are evidence that the artist's earlier intentions to be 'impersonal' and 'to create art for art's sake' has been significantly modified in his paintings of the eighties.

Graphic Art: Balsaitis's experimentation with other media has resulted in a series of graphic monotypes. In his series work, *Night Flying*, 1981, consisting of thirty-six coloured, modular aquatints, he uses the same idiom as in his paintings and renders his pictures with great sensitivity. Produced from drawings with the aid of a video camera and computer, these graphic works are embossed and subtly coloured, their imagery related to that of Balsaitis's paintings and stemming from his individual pictorial vocabulary.

Film Production: Balsaitis's philosophy of 'impersonal art' holds strong in his three abstract films which were produced with financial assistance from the Experimental Film and Television Fund of the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council. The first, entitled *Processed Process*, 1972-75, is a 16mm film in colour and black and white. Balsaitis explains: '... it is about the transformation from one state of awareness to another. The main point in this is to show through process that there is continuous change and that film is about itself.'⁴⁹³ The abstract film of fifty-five minutes duration consists of a

⁴⁹³ From booklet, Cinema Gallery, Melbourne, undated.

swift succession of contradictory and supplementary images taken from the human, cultural and mechanical environment and from the world of nature. Graeme Sturgeon has commented: 'The extraordinary thing about the film is that from his basic material, still photographs of architecture, landscape and people, Balsaitis has created a sense of Rococo grandeur which is as impressive as it is unlikely.'⁴⁹⁴

Balsaitis produced his second film, *Space Time Structures*, 1977, with the assistance of the Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film Commission. It is completely abstract, composed of contrived, kaleidoscopic, geometric patterns changing at enormous speed. The images appear, diverge, coalesce, submerge and reappear, all the time changing in shape and colour. This movement continues for the entire film length of thirty-two minutes. Each of the images from the multitude that appear could serve as a picture in its own right, and make the film's sub-title, 'A Moving Painting', particularly apt. Jennifer Phipps describes the method used: '[Balsaitis] draws with the camera and editing techniques, colouring with filters, as well as filming drawings and paintings.'⁴⁹⁵

The growing, coalescing, colliding pictures reveal an inexhaustible source of possible pattern combinations. Gay Stuart writes that Balsaitis's film is an '... hypnotic visual invention for its own sake ... (which) you will not find anywhere on this planet on record or cassette.'⁴⁹⁶ In 1982, Balsaitis produced his third abstract film, *Erratica*, with the assistance of the Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film Commission. It is a colour film of twenty minutes duration. By now, Balsaitis had earned a high reputation as a film-maker and *Erratica* was chosen to represent Australia's *avant-garde* art movement at the Osnabruck Experimental Film Festival held at the Deutsches Film Museum in Frankfurt, Germany.

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS: AUSTRALIAN-BORN

Melbourne is home to the largest group of Australian-born Lithuanian artists, fourteen in all. Most engage in two or more art forms; all have only recently embarked on artistic activity and are keen to explore possibilities offered by various media. Affinity with their Lithuanian cultural heritage is evident in the work of all, although each displays this ethnicity in a different way: the work of sculptor Faustas Sadauskas provoked art critic Christopher Heathcote to observe that the sculptures were 'reverberating with the heritage of Lithuanian

⁴⁹⁴ Sturgeon, *Australian*, 16 June 1975.

⁴⁹⁵ Jennifer Phipps in *Art and Australia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1980, p. 49

⁴⁹⁶ Gay Stuart, *Herald*, Melbourne, 30 Aug. 1978.

art.⁴⁹⁷ Other artists, notably Robertas Gvildys and Danius Kesminas, show a reverence for Nature and natural objects. Admiration and homage to Nature emerge in the paintings of Nijolė Pengelley, Kristina Vaičiulytė and Mindaugas Simankevičius and in art photography by Arūnas Klupšas. The most cosmopolitan of the group, Sigitas Gabriele, reveals a Lithuanian ethos in the way the general lyricism and specific subtlety of his paintings echo the mood of characteristic Lithuanian melodies. Direct folk-art quotations appear in the graphic art of Kristina Didelis and in the textile designs of Eglė Klupšas.

Sigitas Gabriele⁴⁹⁸ is a painter, graphic artist, sculptor, musician and art teacher. He was born in Melbourne on 2 April 1949 to Stasys Gabriejoliavičius and Dana Nasvytis. His childhood and teenage years were influenced by theatrical life, especially when, in 1965, his father became a violinist in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Sigitas attended not only his mother's dance performances but also concerts and operatic rehearsals and performances. He was able, he says, to observe the process of transformation: to follow an opera from early rehearsal to polished performance. He also learned much about the mechanics of stage properties and of the lighting and changing of stage settings. Later, curtains, ropes and lighting effects were to play an important role in his visual art.

At the age of twelve he joined the local Astronomical Society and began to see similarities between what he saw through the telescope and what he observed with a microscope during science lessons. His fascination with both macrocosm and microcosm has endured. While still at high school he began to paint and sell his oil and watercolour landscape paintings, and was influenced by the abstract work of artist Adomas Vingis, a family friend, and by the social realist painting of Noel Counihan, a neighbour.

Although Gabriele demonstrated considerable musical talent, learning to play by ear the harmonica, guitar, flute, clarinet and saxophone, his father discouraged him from pursuing a musical career. On completion of his secondary education at Nunawading High School, however, he was given whole-hearted parental support when he decided to study visual arts. He enrolled in 1969 at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology where he found printmaking exciting. Graham King introduced him to silk-screening, lithography, mono-printing and etching. While at the RMIT he gained a fellowship to study Renaissance art and theory at Melbourne University. In

⁴⁹⁷ Christopher Heathcote, *Age*, Melbourne, 7 Aug. 1991.

⁴⁹⁸ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 1 Nov. 1987 and in later conversations.

1972 Gabriele graduated from the Institute and then studied at Hawthorn State College for a Diploma of Education which he was awarded in 1974.

In the following year he began work as a tutor in painting at Melbourne State College, and from 1976 to 1978 lectured in printmaking at Frankston State College. While there he married fellow lecturer, art historian Elizabeth Gertsakis. During his years of studying and working in visual arts, music had played a secondary role, but in 1979 it began to become prominent in his life: he joined a jazz band playing in cabarets and night clubs. Besides playing, he began to write songs which were political and topical commentaries. In 1981 he accepted the position of lecturer in design in the Dance and Drama department at the Rusden campus of Victoria State College where he was able to combine his artistic, musical and acting abilities. In 1985, when his wife became lecturer in art theory at the Tasmanian School of Art, Gabriele became a free-lance artist in Hobart until 1989 when they returned with their young daughter to Melbourne. He is now based in Melbourne working as a free-lance visual artist.

Early Painting: In the sixties and seventies Gabriele admired the coolness and objectivity of abstraction with its principles of reduction and superiority of colour over other pictorial elements. In the seventies he experimented with formal aspects of art and greatly admired the work of American artists Stuart Davies, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhard, Hans Hofmann, Barnett Newman and Adolf Gottlieb, as well as Melburnians James Doolin, Alan Leach-Jones and Dale Hickey. All helped to form Gabriele's outlook on art. In *Cradled Landscape*, 1977 (ill. 282), a lyrical and refined oil painting, Gabriele has introduced theatrical properties, suspension ropes and images of curtains. The picture evokes a black stage backdrop with a curtain hanging in the foreground. The landscape appears to hang by ropes or powerlines and is rendered in subtle and bright but veiled colours merging into each other, their confluence transcending colour folds and ridges of differing hues. This harmonious colour tonality is reminiscent of the technique used by Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis. However, Gabriele does not dwell on the romantic qualities of the colour image but, rather, confronts it with the stark blackness of the background and subdues it by hanging painters' palettes on the ropes.

Epic Painting: In the eighties, after experimenting with the formal aspects of art and with the ambiguities of form and colour, Gabriele considered ways in which he could best express his personal point of view. Although he has considerable writing talent, he decided that the best way for him to record his experiences and comment on social issues was pictorially. He turned to epic realism in a series of large-scale, narrative paintings. With the approach of the

Australian bicentennial, he pondered the questions of migration and colonisation. In 1985 he commenced a series based on Tasmanian history. The first in the series, *Bringer of the Keys*, 1985 (ill. 283), is a large (3m x 2m) oil painting. The whole picture is executed in a subdued dark monotone, sparingly relieved by an occasional area in gold. Colour is applied thinly over the richly textured background of the flat painting. It is divided into three planes connected by the image of a sailing ship about to enter the estuary of the Derwent River. The upper section shows the three major political powers -- Great Britain, the USA and Japan -- with which Tasmania is linked; the middle plane is the centre stage with the ship prominent; and the lower plane is the setting for politicians, frauds and no-hopers. The right of the picture shows the 'Ship of Fools' holding above their heads a metaphorical key and cross signifying their belief that only their key can unlock the truth. The many images endow the painting simultaneously with drama, irony, depression and hope.

Graphic Art: From 1975 Gabriele worked with silk-screen prints in bright, primary colours, the movement and spatial relationship of the colour forms being his major concern. *Dowager's Kiosk*, 1983 (ill. 284), is a joyful silk-screen print in which ribbons of flat, primary colours seem to burst from the frame in a swinging movement across the picture plane. The abrupt colour changes of the bands equate with changes in theatrical lighting. The festive effect of the swirling ribbons is subdued by the diaphanous veils which fly across and above the picture, dropping vertically at the right, as if a performance is ending.

Sculpture: During the seventies Gabriele created painted sculptures that can be regarded as three-dimensional paintings. They are cool, bold, detached works, e.g. *Construction*, 1977 (ill. 285). Here he is concerned with the equilibrium of shape, colour and texture. He balances geometric and biomorphic forms together with subtle, monochromatic grey in various hues, at the same time juxtaposing the texture of silk and the hardness of wood. The stasis of the whole construction is optically invigorated by the distribution of dark grey, giving the illusion of slow, circular movement.

The kinetic element is verified in his 'moving sculptures', created for the Australian Contemporary Dance Theatre in Melbourne for their dance performance, *Passages* in 1984 (ill. 286). The performance was choreographed by Ron Bekker and based on music originally composed by Ravel and given a contemporary re-arrangement using synthesizers and other electronic equipment. Reminiscent of work by Brancusi, Gabriele's two giant figures, male and female and measuring 6m high by 3m wide, were moved by mechanical

means from the sides of the stage to the centre where they met and parted. Those structures played a pivotal role in the performance; the dance was choreographed around them. As well, the changes in coloured lighting on the sculptures effected transformations in the mood of the performance.

Graphic artist **Nijolė Pengelley**⁴⁹⁹ was born in Melbourne on 13 December 1951, the younger daughter of Vosylius Jeršovas, and his wife Sofija. Encouraged by her parents, she began to draw and paint early in her childhood, and was surrounded by folk-art carvings done by her father and by paintings and art books. After leaving Sacred Heart College in 1968, she studied at Melbourne Teachers College, graduating in 1972 with a major in graphic arts and craft. In 1973 she received a Certificate of Graphic Arts from the Bendigo Institute of Technology, and then became a high school art and graphics teacher. In 1981 she married Richard Pengelley, a computer systems analyst, and they have two children.

Pengelley's work consists of graphics of various kinds: lithographs, linoprints, silkscreen prints and drawings. Her themes are abstract or semi-abstract landscapes or fantasy images. In *Landscape with Boulders*, 1972 (ill. 287), she represents the landscape in strong, broad bands, the edges of which are clearly defined and the colours sharply contrasting. In *Sunburst*, 1972 (ill. 288), the contours of her images are pulsating and irregular and the colours create a mysterious, undefined shape. The sun is shown as an overpowering force animating the world. A quite different world, feminine, intimate and coquettish, is represented in *Lady of the Future World*, 1983 (ill. 289). As Pengelley describes it: 'I think the overall theme was to do with women in general and the sort of fantasy lady image we would like to imagine ourselves to be -- someone of mystery, of power and of beauty. A lady who is far from the real roles we play in our everyday lives.' Against the marbled, abstract background, the subject is rendered in delicate and minute detail, and the total concept is intimate and at the same time universal. In 1978, Nijolė Pengelley held her first solo exhibition of graphic art at The Real Thing Gallery in Olinda, Victoria, and she contributes regularly to Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Painter and graphic artist **Kristina Vaičiulytė**⁵⁰⁰ was born in Melbourne on 3 June 1951. Her parents, Antanas and Jadvyga Vaičiulis, both former teachers, raised three daughters: Emilija, a musician; Jadvyga, a ballet dancer; and the

⁴⁹⁹ Bio/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 26 Nov. 1988 and given in letter 6 Oct. 1989.

⁵⁰⁰ Bio/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 27 Nov. 1988.

youngest, Kristina, an artist. The family held the arts in high regard, and attending concerts and art exhibitions were routine activities. Until 1965 Kristina attended East Melbourne Catholic Ladies College and the Lithuanian Weekend School, enjoying drawing, painting and poetry-writing as spare time activities. In 1968, after completing studies at University High School, she became a freelance artist. In 1977, she spent a year in Canada, and on return to Melbourne worked as a public servant and painted in her free time. She enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1980 to study art, but did not complete the course. She explained that she did not like the required still life and plaster-cast copying.

Vaičiulytė's paintings divulge an emotional, romantic world filled with tension and suspense. They are spontaneous, sincere creations, often consisting of imaginary or legendary landscapes without action or actors. Man's presence is merely implied in the lonely landscapes. Her rich colours, loose brushstrokes and fluid lines convey a certain diffidence and lack of resolution. In *Through the Caravan Window*, 1984 (ill. 290), she creates a tense atmosphere saturated with expectation, pathos and agitation. In *Longing*, 1985 (ill. 291), the legendary landscape, although cooler and calmer, is loaded with nostalgia. The fairyland atmosphere is further enhanced by the rhythmical emphasis on number: three hills, three trees, three birds. Vaičiulytė depicts fairy beings only in her graphic art. With sensitive and pulsating lines she alludes to part-anthropomorphic, part-floral creatures whose fragile outlines require the viewer to complete the image intended by the artist, as in *Flower Fairy*, 1985 (ill. 292).

Since 1970, Vaičiulytė has participated regularly in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions as well as taking part in the Dandenong Art Festival in 1973 and holding a solo exhibition at Queenscliff Art Gallery in 1975.

Robertas Gvildys⁵⁰¹ is a sculptor and was born in Geelong, Victoria in 1953. He was introduced to art at an early age by his uncle, Edvardas Lipšys, who encouraged him to draw. He developed a taste for abstract art and for the works of Brancusi and Salvador Dali. After completing his secondary education at Bell Park High School, he studied architecture at Deakin University, concurrently working as a supervisory draftsman with various building companies. During this time he began sculptural experimentation with molten lead and painting in acrylics. After leaving university he worked as a designer and construction supervisor and in 1984 won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Award for Environmental Design. Since then he has worked as an interior designer.

⁵⁰¹ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 5 Jan. 1991.

Gvildys's approach to life and art bears the strong influence of his great-grandmother who used to take him at an early age for walks 'into an enchanted world where every leaf on a branch and every stone on the path was alive and would speak when spoken to.' Gvildys' art is concerned with the living forces entrapped within natural objects, regardless of their ability to move or communicate audibly. He favours the juxtaposition of different materials, often including at least one natural medium such as leaves or stones.

In his sculpture *Brother*, 1984 (ill. 293) he honours the stone as his silent brother, abraded by time and the elements. The stone is given some human features and is mounted as if on a slender body as it calmly and pensively watches the observer. When the sculpture is activated by an electric current, its kinetic nature gives the eerie impression of a living yet mute creature.

A similar idea of omnipresent life is expressed in his collage sculpture *Life*, 1990 (ill. 294), which consists of several media mounted on a large plaster-covered board. This is a work heavily influenced by the surrealists, especially Magritte, and its meaning easily eludes the onlooker because of its idiosyncratic qualities. However, the sculptor gives some clues when he says, 'Probably from my childhood this idea of interchangeability of forms of life affected me, and in my mind women and flowers are interchangeable.' *Life* shows a female torso with the head replaced by a dried banana flower (itself simulating the profile of a curly head) and the hips by a palm husk in a representation of omnipresent life force. The way in which the sculpture is mounted seems to symbolize the continuity of life as a never-ending process in timeless space. In sculpture Gvildys searches for new ways to express old notions; in architecture he endeavours to combine both architectural and sculptural forms so that they enhance each other.

The eldest of three children, sculptor Vytas Jonas Didelis⁵⁰² was born in Melbourne on 12 February, 1953. His parents, Vytautas and Milda Didelis, were art lovers and regularly visited art exhibitions with their children and had many art works and books in their home. They encouraged Vytas and his sister Kristina to draw and paint from an early age. In 1972 Didelis, having completed studies at Oak Park High School, enrolled at the Prahan College of Advanced Education to study art. In 1975 he studied photography, silk-screening, printmaking and sculpture at the Preston Institute of Technology under Peter Cole, and then returned to Prahan College from which he graduated in 1978 with a major in sculpture. In the same year he established his own business as a

⁵⁰² Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 28 Nov. 1987.

designer, building renovator and commercial writer. In 1979 he married Janette Deering, an art teacher.

Didelis's sculptures reflect the mechanical age. He works with old metal, found and discarded objects, welding them into abstract structures, which soar into space or extend along the ground e.g. *Untitled I*, 1977 (ill. 295), and *Untitled II*, 1977 (ill. 296). Didelis uses accidents in an effort to 'describe a solid object without making a solid object.' Ideas emerge while working and adjusting one piece to another, and his sculptures evolve in the process of creation. In spite of the abundance of accidental forms his structural assemblages contain a certain order and even lyricism, e.g. *Untitled I*. His larger, welded sculptures allude to rockets and missiles and suggest force and movement. Didelis has also constructed several kinetic sculptures which are activated by electricity to become mobile and to produce sound. He does not paint his work, preferring to show the rough surfaces of the metal. He has been influenced by David Smith and Gonzales and by the junk sculptures of Australians Robert Klippel and Colin Lanceley.

Didelis is an active member of the Lithuanian community. In 1982 and 1990 he was the organiser and curator of the Lithuanian art exhibitions held at the Wool House Gallery in Melbourne during Lithuanian Days. He has participated also in the Latrobe Sculpture Biennale held at Latrobe University in 1978 and in the Prahan Sculptors Exhibition held at the Gryphon Gallery in Melbourne in 1979.

Graphic artist and jewellery designer and maker, **Kristina Didelis**⁵⁰³ was born in Melbourne on 11 March 1960, the second child of Vytautas and Milda Didelis. An avid reader from an early age, she particularly enjoyed illustrated historical works. In 1978 she completed secondary study at Oak Park High School, and the following year enrolled at La Trobe University to study history and sociology. The apparel, and particularly the jewellery, worn in bygone eras had a fascination for her and strongly influenced her later artistic career. She also attended the Lithuanian Weekend School and folk-dancing group and was a member of the Scouts organization, Youth Theatre and choir. Before completing her degree, she began work in 1981 as a clerk in the Defence Department, and studied art in Technical and Further Education evening classes. In 1989 she enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study gold and silversmithing and graduated in 1991.

Didelis is interested in both graphic art and jewellery. She takes her inspiration for graphic art from Lithuanian folk-art and some of the books and

⁵⁰³ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 28 Nov. 1987.

folk art items from her childhood home. In her lino-cuts she changes traditional images by embellishing them with her own designs, as in *Lithuanian Maiden*, 1980 (ill. 297), or by creating her own versions of legendary figures, as in *Jūratė*, 1981. Her main artistic output is jewellery. When working with silver or gold, she uses restrained, conventional designs; however, she says working with discarded materials allows 'fantasy to run wild.' She prefers to work with everyday components such as paper-mache, clay, wood and rubber. Her inspiration often comes from exotic cultures: Egyptian, African and Etruscan. She produces large, eye-catching jewellery which borders on the theatrical. (ill. 298 and 299) Those of papier-mache and clay are suited for use in the theatre and in fashion parades. Didelis aims to blend present and past cultures, especially the exotic to create pleasant, eye-catching objects to brighten everyday life.

Mindaugas Simankevičius⁵⁰⁴ is a painter, graphic artist, poet and musician. The youngest son of Viktoras and Danutė Simankevičius, Mindaugas Simankevičius was born in Melbourne on 14 May 1956. Growing up in an artistic family, he was surrounded by works of art, by art books and by his parents' artistic activities. As he showed artistic talent it was expected that he would pursue an art career. He was, however particularly interested in physics, mathematics and music and, after leaving University High School in 1974, he studied electronic music at the Melbourne Conservatorium until 1976. In 1977 he studied painting, sculpture and history of art at Prahan College, at the same time working part-time, sometimes in jobs related to music and the film industry. From 1978 to 1982 he worked in the Film and Television Department at Melbourne State College. When his interest in the mechanics of film-making waned, he began to draw cartoons and illustrations for newspapers and magazines, and from 1982 worked at various firms as a freelance computographic artist, using computers for artistic purpose.

While working with films, Simankevičius began painting, writing poetry in English and illustrating it, as he says, just for himself. He realised that 'painting, music and astronomy have one thing in common - space.' He was, and remains, concerned with 'big issues': the cosmos, the universal human condition and political and social comment on human power. He often paints in series on particular themes, e.g. his *Ned Kelly* and *Aboriginal* series. His painting style is devoid of detail, rendered spontaneously and without reference to particular time or places. In *Duke*, 1983 (ill. 300), he personifies brutal and callous power: the image is executed in bold, broad and pastel strokes using harsh, garish colours. It is possible to detect the influence of Čiurlionis's *Rex*,

⁵⁰⁴ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 1 Dec. 1988.

especially in the representation of the crown, but the work is conceptually opposite in mood. *The Fall*, 1984 (ill. 301) is also concerned with power and authority. It depicts two uniformed men falling through universal space, and symbolises the fall of organised authority throughout history.

Simankevičius participates in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions, is active in the Lithuanian Youth Theatre and since 1988 has been an editor of *Jaužinis*. He contributes regularly to group showings of the Uffici, Intaglio and Prahan art galleries and various art festivals in Melbourne.

Jūratė Sasnaitis⁵⁰⁵ is another Melburnian active in a number of fields: as graphic artist, painter, poet and secondary school art teacher. Born in Melbourne on 19 June, 1958, the only child of Jonas and Rūta Sasnaitis, she remembers being taken from a very young age to art exhibitions, museums and theatres. Her father, a graduate in agriculture, provided her with many illustrated Lithuanian children's magazines and art books, most of them published in the USA. After completing her secondary education at the MacRobertson Girls High School in 1975, she enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study sculpture. In 1978, she gained a Bachelor of Arts degree with sculpture as a major, and at once left for a tour of Europe and Lithuania. In Europe the sculptures of Jacob Epstein, Marino Marini and Ernst Barlach impressed her; in Lithuania she attended theatre performances and came to understand what a powerful art form theatre can be. She was also enchanted by ceramic, graphic and sepulchral art. Following her return to Australia, she commenced work as a designer and layout person at the Backyard Press in Melbourne. During 1980 and 1981 she studied at Melbourne State College and graduated with a Diploma of Education; later, she taught art at Hadfield High School.

While studying at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Sasnaitis developed an interest in drawing and painting. Although her book illustrations are determined by the text, she shows originality in interpretation. In *Involution*, 1985 (ill. 302), a moral and emotional struggle is represented as physical combat. Her line, although even and tenuous, depicts the motion and violence of the struggle. By means of simple linear crossing, re-crossing and zig-zagging, she animates and accentuates the illustrations in cool, elegant and expressive representation.

Sasnaitis writes and illustrates poetry and poetic prose. Her work has appeared in *Post Neo*, *Syllable*, *Social Alternatives* and other magazines. In her spare time, she organizes public poetry readings with other young Australian

⁵⁰⁵ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 2 Dec. 1988.

poets and illustrates their poetry collections. She has illustrated the following publications: *Involution* by Des Cowley and *Possessives and Plurals* by Berni Janssen, both 1985; *In the Azure Room in the Peacock Palace* by Rob Finlayson and *Cava's Room* by Adrian D'Ambra, both 1987.

In painting, Sasnaitis prefers portraiture because of her interest in human personality. She works in interpretative realist style, using acrylic as her medium. In *Kay*, 1982 (ill. 303), she renders the image in bold areas of flat, bright colour without attempting to idealise or ennoble the subject. As a painter, Sasnaitis has as her primary intention the aesthetics and organization of form and colour. She has participated in Lithuanian Days exhibitions in Melbourne in 1982, Canberra in 1984 and Adelaide in 1988.

Sculptor and ceramist **Faustas Sadauskas**⁵⁰⁶ was born, the second of three children, in Melbourne on 4 May 1959. In 1971 the family moved to Moorabbin where Faustas completed secondary study at Bentley High School in 1977. During his high school years he attended Lithuanian weekend school and completed an advanced course in Lithuanian.

In 1978 Sadauskas enrolled at the Prahan College of Advanced Education to study art, graduating in 1980. His main interest was ceramic art. In 1983 he participated in the Lithuanian Sports Festival in the USA; this gave him an opportunity to visit art galleries and museums in America and in Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands. The experience, he says, did not influence his artistic perception but did arouse an interest in theosophy. In 1984 Sadauskas enrolled in Arts at the University of Melbourne, his main interests being Renaissance art history and literature. In the following year he added sociology and political philosophy to his studies. At this time Sadauskas's interest turned to sculpture as he says he found the medium of wood rewarding for experimentation: more controllable than clay and instantly visible. He admired the works of Henry Moore and Brancusi. In 1987 he travelled to Lithuania to study sculpture at the Art Academy in Vilnius under Professor Vladas Vildžiūnas. Before returning to Australia he married Aurelija Dobilevičiūtė, a medical practitioner. They currently live with their two children at Moorabbin.

Sadauskas's sculptures, some solid, others open and light, are executed with great care. The separate segments are carefully formed by the inversion of concave and convex shapes. Thus, seemingly simple circles and rings are sculptural pieces in their own right, as in *Sculpture*, 1982 (ill. 304). This is constructed of many separate units in which the artist juxtaposes movement and statics. He alludes to planets, stars and cosmic bodies in the ring-like structures,

⁵⁰⁶ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 2 Dec. 1988.

circles, spheres and hemispheres which, although interrelated in their apparent movement, are fixed in predetermined positions. He seeks thereby to capture permanence and regularity. The same ideas take another form in his solid work entitled *Serpent*, 1986 (ill. 305). Here, Sadauskas expresses continuity and timelessness through the repetition of a single motif which alludes to the Lithuanian mythological žaltys, symbolising the continuity of life and all-pervading wisdom.

In his work of the late eighties Sadauskas aimed at monumentality. He produced powerful, austere monolithic sculptures, some with harmonious, relieving voids, e.g. *Goddess*, 1990 (ill. 306), whose concept is bound to Lithuanian mythology. The inner surfaces are inscribed with the Runic alphabet which gives the work an archaic air, at the same time giving it contemporary form. Art critic Christopher Heathcote, reviewing his exhibition, writes:

One initially detects allusions to the sculptural formats of Vincas Jomantas and Constantin Brancusi in the compulsively shaped hunks of wood, ... although I was informed that these were not conscious influences. Instead, like both artists, his rich ideas represent an appraisal and reverberating with the heritage of Lithuanian art.⁵⁰⁷

Since 1982 Sadauskas has participated in art exhibitions during Lithuanian Days. In 1991 he held his first solo exhibition at the Blackwood Street Gallery in Melbourne.

Eglė Klupšas⁵⁰⁸ is a textile designer. The elder of the two children of Algis and Julija Klupšas, she was born in Melbourne on 12 May 1963. Until 1980, she studied at Mordialloc-Chelsea High School where her favourite subjects were art, literature and English. She received encouragement from her parents to pursue art and in 1981 enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study textile design, graduating in 1983. She has been strongly influenced by the work and ideas of the 19th century English interior designer, William Morris, who was a pioneer in the aesthetic enhancement of everyday life. Klupšas's work is mostly functional, comprising designs for fabrics. She works in modules which are repeated and united into one pictorial plane, e.g. *Design 1*, 1983 (ill. 307). Here, geometric, rigid lines form a definite, rhythmic statement in which the colour plays a secondary role. In *Design 2*, 1984 (ill. 308), the pattern is freer and is superimposed on a richly coloured background, the tonal relationships of which rise to the foreground and enhance the pattern. In *Design 3*, 1984 (ill. 309), she manipulates the universal symbol of the sun

⁵⁰⁷ Heathcote, *Age*, Melbourne, 7 Aug. 1991.

⁵⁰⁸ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 5 Dec. 1988.

into a bold textile pattern. Klupšas's work varies in mood and style. She states that she aims to condition public taste towards novel approaches to textile design, thereby making it possible to alter the domestic environment to promote psychological well-being.

Klupšas is active in Lithuanian community organizations and participates regularly in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions.

Art photographer **Arūnas Klupšas**,⁵⁰⁹ the younger child of Algis and Julija Klupšas, was born in Melbourne on 2 July 1965. At home, art was highly regarded and the family regularly visited art exhibitions. Until 1983, he attended Mordialloc-Chelsea High School where, although there were no art classes, Klupšas carried out photographic experiments. In 1983, he won the Age prize for the best superposition-type photograph and the following year was awarded first prize for a still-life photograph at the Queen's College art exhibition. In 1984, he enrolled at Melbourne University for a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in fine arts and English literature, and after graduating in 1988 enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study commercial photography.

Arūnas Klupšas works in both colour and black and white photography. The world he presents is devoid of unnecessary detail which might detract from the essential elements. He seeks to find the sublime and lyrical in both natural and urban environments. In his landscape photographs the grandeur is often over-powering, e.g. *Grain*, 1985 (ill. 310). Capturing the moment when the sun is emerging on the horizon, he shows the sky in fine tonal subtlety, demonstrating the sun's gradual illumination of the earth. His colour photography borders on painting: the hues blend like colours on an artist's palette, e.g. *Study 2*, 1984 (ill. 311). Here the cluster of trees serves merely as a means to display the splendour of the sky. Klupšas finds beauty and poetry of other kinds in the urban environment, e.g. *Flinders Street Station*, 1985 (ill. 312). In this work the contrast of light and dark resembles that of a wood-cut print. In the columns and double triangles of shadows he finds the poetry of street and station.⁵¹⁰

Klupšas has participated since 1984 in Lithuanian Days art exhibitions. An example of his work is the three-metre-long mosaic panel which depicts Lithuanian youth activities and which hangs in the Lithuanian House in Melbourne.

⁵⁰⁹ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 5 Dec. 1988.

⁵¹⁰ The illustrations of his work in this thesis are of poor quality and do not show the subtlety of his photography.

The third of four children of Petras and Dana Monika Baltutis, graphic artist **Laura Baltutis**⁵¹¹ was born in Melbourne on 15 March, 1963. She was educated at Avila College where her favourite subjects were art and languages. Her interest in art was encouraged by her uncles, painters Vingis and Butkūnas. However, wishing to be a modern, independent woman, she took the advice given by her librarian mother to study in a more practical field. In 1985, she graduated from the University of Melbourne with the degree of Bachelor of Dental Science. While practising dentistry, she enrolled in a graphic art course organised by the Council of Adult Education to study graphic design, drawing and painting in 'order to have a creative outlet.' Baltutis is interested in single and group figural compositions and in exploring the psychological aspects of the human condition. In *Deep in Thought*, 1983 (ill. 313), she attempts to represent the complexity of a young man's thoughts by symbolically relating them to the intricate structure of a tree branch. Her line is unadorned and the strong contrast between black and white is devoid of any nuance in shading.

In other media, such as oils and acrylics, Baltutis also explores human psychological problems. She participates regularly in art exhibitions at Lithuanian Days. In her spare time she writes poetry in English.

The youngest of five children of Povilas and Vida Baltutis, painter **Rūta Baltutis**⁵¹² was born in Melbourne on 2 October 1966. Her father was an accountant and two of her uncles, Adomas Vingis and Napoleonas Butkūnas, were painters. Art was held in high esteem by the family and artistic activities encouraged. In 1985 she completed her secondary education at MacRobertson Girls High School where her studies included drawing and painting. She is currently (1992) enrolled in an economics course at the University of Melbourne where she is also a member of the students' Fine Arts Society. Baltutis admires Renaissance art, surrealism and expressionism, yet her own paintings tend towards the abstract, e.g her oil painting *Fire*, 1985 (ill. 314). She prefers to work on a large scale, generally using bright, primary colours with bold brush strokes. Rūta Baltutis has been a regular participant in art exhibitions at recent Lithuanian Days.

Sculptor **Danius Kesminas**⁵¹³ is also a painter and musician. The eldest of three sons, he was born to Antanas and Audronė Kesminas in Melbourne on 22 December 1966. After matriculating from Xavier College in Kew in 1984, he

⁵¹¹ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 4 Dec. 1988.

⁵¹² Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 7 Dec. 1988.

⁵¹³ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 4 Dec. 1988.

enrolled at the University of Melbourne to study architecture. After a year he enrolled at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study art and graduated with a high distinction in sculpture in 1989. In the same year he received the Nexus Design Travelling Art Award for sculpture and made study tours to Lithuania and the USA. At home art was greatly valued in all its forms. Since his high school years he has been interested in Lithuanian history and ancient religions.

Kesminas describes his profession as 'fine artist' and he is the only Lithuanian in Australia or elsewhere creating four-dimensional, transient fire sculptures. His work is influenced by the American conceptual-environmental artists of the sixties -- Richard Serra, Robert Morris and Robert Smithson. These artists worked mainly in open spaces, creating temporary structures and performing various happenings with an emphasis on ecological, social and political issues.

From the beginning of Kesminas's artistic career there was a distinct dichotomy in his work. His paintings were conventional abstracts, refined and lyrical, but his sculptures were monumental, rebellious and contemptuous expressions, unadorned, made of rough-hewn stumps and planks and heavy with symbolic connotation. His first sculpture works were hybrids of minimalism and conceptual art with symbolic references. An example is *Ancient Diviner*, 1989 (ill. 315), in which he says his intention is to show the interaction of Nature and wood contrasted with culture and metal. An ironic commentary on social issues is expressed in his corrugated-iron construction, *Urban Outhouse*, 1989 (ill. 316), commissioned by the Gold Street gallery. He is, however, better known for his conceptual art, transient in nature, the four-dimensional fire sculptures. In his endeavour to leave gallery space as the exhibition place for what he regards as outmoded works of art and a place of corrupt dealing, he prefers to have his work outside galleries in unlimited, outdoor space. Perhaps his fascination with mythology and his respect for ancient religions has led him to use the element of fire as a medium by which to express transience, resistance and protest against the establishment, oppression and conventional art forms. He writes '... I decided to make a fire sculpture which would be a "guerilla" activity.'⁵¹⁴ His first fire sculpture was executed at No. 10 Park Street in Abbotsford in Melbourne in 1988.

In 1991 he travelled to Vilnius where he witnessed Lithuanians form a human chain to defend their parliament against Soviet tanks. He comments:

The tension was suffocating and it seemed that there was nothing left but to pound the earth, break it open, cut and grind the steel ... these were reactive processes which in the political context had reflexive

⁵¹⁴ Danius Kesminas, *Jaučinius*, No. 33, Sept. 1991, p. 18

meaning. Simply working outside...in sub-zero temperatures of -25 degrees Celsius ... was an activity of resistance.'⁵¹⁵

His reaction was to construct *Fire Line*, 1991, consisting of fifteen metres of steel and ten metres of timber beams. It was burned on 2 February before about two hundred onlookers in Vilnius.

In New York he was disturbed by the differences in social classes and by violence and racial tension, and reacted with another fire sculpture, *New York Consequence*, 1991. Prior to its immolation it consisted of welded steel frames and a three foot square plywood cube, symbolising the visual form of tautology. In Melbourne, with the artist's group Basis, he arranged a symbolic fire sculptural spectacle, *Incendiary*, 1991 (ill. 317), in which a wooden construction was burned. The fire was intended to have a symbolic link with the Shrine of Remembrance flame. He writes: 'Two poles, two reference positions in Melbourne were lit: the perpetual flame of the Shrine of Remembrance and the line of fire becoming a shrine of forgetfulness.'⁵¹⁶ He perceives fire sculptures as an act not of destruction but of transience, demanding further contemplation. Furthermore, he says that although the fire sculptures are of short duration, they are manifestations of revolt and are 'subservient to no-one.'⁵¹⁷

Kesminas is an active member of the Lithuanian community; in childhood he belonged to the Scouts organisation, completed Lithuanian Weekend School and later was a member of the Lithuanian Youth Organization. He participates in the Lithuanian Youth Theatre, is a co-writer of the magazine *Jaužiniai* and for three years conducted the Lithuanian Youth program on Radio 3EA.

LATECOMERS TO ART

This is a group of six, five of whom came to art either following bereavement or from loneliness. Even though most displayed artistic ability in their youth they had, for various reasons, not engaged in art until personal trauma or tragedy later in their lives led to their seeking solace in artistic activity.

The only male member of this group is painter **Napoleonas Butkūnas** (1907-1983)⁵¹⁸ who was born into a farming family in Plungė in Lithuania in

⁵¹⁵ *ibid.*, No. 32, June 1991, p. 16

⁵¹⁶ From *Documentation of Incendiary*, 14 Sept. 1991.

⁵¹⁷ Kesminas, *Jaužiniai*, No. 33, Sept. 1991.

⁵¹⁸ Biog/ed details given by his niece, Dana Baltutis, 23 Nov. 1988.

1907. He completed his secondary education at Plungė High School where his favourite subject was art. In 1928, he enrolled at the Kaunas Military Academy and graduated as an Air Force lieutenant. However, after arguments with superiors, he was dismissed. He studied commerce at the Klaipėda Institute of Commerce from which he graduated in 1938 and then worked as a teacher at Plungė High School. He married in 1942 and had one daughter. In the same year he was press-ganged by the Germans and taken to Germany to work. He never saw his family again. After the war Butkūnas sought refuge in Oldenburg camp and taught mathematics and English at the camp's Lithuanian High school. In 1947 he migrated to Australia and fulfilled his work contract as a miner on the West Coast of Tasmania. In 1951 he moved to Melbourne and became an active member of the Lithuanian community. He was a founder of the Lithuanian bookshop operating at Lithuanian House and was its director for twenty years. For some years he was president of the Lithuanian Community Council and a member of many organizations, including the Esperanto Club.

Butkūnas turned to painting late in his life, most probably from loneliness. It is not known whether he had any formal art training but it is known that, while at high school, he used to draw and paint for pleasure. He worked in Melbourne as a storeman and in his free time travelled and painted and photographed the Australian landscape. His oil paintings show a sense of composition and competent brushwork. His themes are Australian landscapes rendered realistically and with conventional perspective, as in *Landscape*, circa 1980 (ill. 318). He often donated his paintings to Lithuanian charitable organizations. He died in Melbourne in March, 1983 and bequeathed his estate of over \$30,000 to the Australian Lithuanian Foundation for cultural activities.

Painter Elena Zdanavičius⁵¹⁹ began serious artistic pursuits after the death of her husband. She was born Elena Strangerbergaitė in Kaunas on 27 June 1907. In 1928 she completed high school where she showed artistic talent and often painted for pleasure in watercolour. Elena's early tutors advised her to study fine arts. However for what she thought of as practical reasons she enrolled at the University of Lithuania⁵²⁰ to study English and German. In 1933 she married lawyer Kazys Zdanavičius. In 1941 with their two children they moved to Germany. After the war their longest stay was in the Lübeck displaced persons camp. In 1949 the family arrived in Australia and settled in Geelong. While her husband worked at the Ford motor factory as a process worker, Elena Zdanavičius was employed at the local hospital as a laboratory assistant.

⁵¹⁹ Biog/ed details given in interview with the artist Nov. 1988.

⁵²⁰ In 1930 re-named the University of Vytautas the Great.

Later, their son Kazys became a medical practitioner and their daughter Elena, an artist.

In 1967, five years after her daughter had graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Zdanavičius enrolled at the Geelong Technical College to study pottery. After her husband's death in 1970 she moved to Melbourne and continued studies in ceramics at Brayton Technical College. From 1972 to 1974 she studied landscape painting at Albert Park Technical College. She was a member of the Victorian Artists Society from 1976 to 1988 and attended courses in landscape and portrait painting. Zdanavičius's paintings are in romantic-realistic style. She depicts homely and picturesque scenes, often from a desire to dwell in such places, e.g. *Solace*, 1982 (ill. 3 19). She reproduces European pastoral landscapes in classical style, using local, tonal colours and fluid brushstrokes. In her Australian landscapes she is more colourful and less dramatic, e.g. *Wattle in the Forest*, 1984 (ill. 320). All her work speaks of peace and contentment. 'Painting attracts me, especially since my husband's death', she says. 'It gives me solace and strength.' She participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Painter and collage artist Genovaitė Kepalas⁵²¹ took up art after raising her family. She was born Genovaitė Šileikaitė in the Lithuanian town of Tauragė on 18 January 1915. At Kaunas Girls High School which she attended until 1933 or 1934, she was awarded a gold medal for drawing and painting. After leaving school, she began work as a fabric designer in the Audiniai company which specialised in fabrics patterned with Lithuanian folk-art motifs. In 1939 she married Leopoldas Kepalas, an electrical engineering student. In 1944 the couple, with their two children, fled Lithuania and, after moving from one bombarded city to another in Austria and Germany, eventually reached Hanau refugee camp.

The family migrated to Australia in 1949. While her husband was contracted as a railway worker, she and her children stayed in various reception camps. In the Uranquinty (NSW) camp, Kepalas taught other women the art of weaving, mainly Lithuanian sashes. In 1951, the family settled in the Melbourne suburb of St. Albans. From 1959 to 1963 Kepalas studied commercial art at the Art Training Institute in Melbourne.

Kepalas is the only member of the Melbourne 'Latecomers' to break away from realistic, representational art and to produce abstract collages and mosaics. Her artistic output comprises paintings, drawings and collages which show the influence of the Dada School and which she describes as 'three-

⁵²¹ Information given by the artist's daughter, Vėjūna Jelleit, 1 Dec. 1988.

dimensional paintings.' Her media include oil, ink, crushed glass, porcelain, driftwood, paper-bark, moss and other miniature, natural objects. Her subject matter is imaginary landscape, fairytales and abstracts. In making her collages, she sketches her ideas on painted backgrounds, arranges her chosen media according to shapes and hues and then glues them on to the picture surface, as in *The Church on the Riverbank*, 1975 (ill. 321). Some of the glass fragments reflect light, others absorb it, creating a vivid and stimulating effect. When Kepalas wishes to emphasise the three-dimensionality of a work and to merge painting with sculpture, she places objects boldly on to the picture surface often in a central position, as in *Eagle*, 1979 (ill. 322).

Kepalas has been a prolific and locally well known artist. Students from St. Albans High School were often taken to her home to view her private art collection and to see her at work. She has regularly participated in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Ceramist and painter Gailutė Gasiūnas⁵²² is also a dealer in art and antiques. She was born into the Klupšas family, both her parents being teachers, on 4 December 1925. Her family had a long tradition of art and handcraft: on the paternal side, there had been four generations of potters and carpenters; on the maternal side, singers and fairy-tale tellers. Her father was co-founder of and an actor in the first Lithuanian theatre in Šiauliai during the Russian and German occupations. Until 1944 Gailutė attended Šiauliai High School and, concurrently, the Theatre Studio where she produced stage decorations. Because of her proficiency in painting and drawing, she was advised by her art teacher, realist painter Teofilius Petraitis (1896-1978) to continue art studies. However, her family fled to Switzerland where they and about two hundred other Lithuanians were given accommodation in Yverdon by the Swiss Government at a hotel which they managed themselves. In Switzerland, Gailutė had the opportunity to meet several private art gallery directors and was able to acquire a basic knowledge of art dealing. In 1949 she married Andrius Gasiūnas, an hydraulic engineer who studied in Zürich on a scholarship from the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America. Later that year, Andrius and Gailutė Gasiūnas migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. A year after his arrival, Andrius Gasiūnas's Swiss qualifications were recognised in Australia and he was offered an engineering position. Sons Aras and Algimantas were born in 1951 and 1959 respectively.

In 1965 Gasiūnas joined the Beaumaris Art Centre, founded by Arthur Boyd, to work in ceramics. There she began to use the Japanese Raku

⁵²² Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 8 Dec. 1988.

technique which requires very high temperature for firing and for glaze and colour depends largely on accident. In 1969 Gailutė's husband was transferred to London and the family moved there. She joined the Camden Art Centre in London to study ceramics, painting and lithography and participated in the centre's annual exhibitions. In 1972 her husband died suddenly and two years later she began art and antique dealing in London. Since her return to Melbourne in 1982 she has continued this trade. Gasiūnas has time occasionally to indulge in painting and ceramics. The latter are functional and exhibit spartan form and decoration. Her vessels are broad-based and she prefers to carve the surfaces in clear, bold and simple patterns and then to oxidize them. She keeps close to earthy, natural colours which, combined with severe decoration and rigorous shapes, give her work a definite austerity. (ill. 323) Gasiūnas is also active in the Melbourne Lithuanian Women's Welfare Society.

Painter Irena Jokubauskas⁵²³ is another who began serious art activity following the death of her husband. The younger of the two daughters of Pranas and Sofija Smilgevičius, she was born on 24 December 1920 on the Laumakiai estate in western Lithuania. Her father had returned from the USA where he had graduated in engineering from Valparaiso University and had been the first lecturer in the Lithuanian language at an American university.

When Irena was a year old, her father died and, four years later, her mother also died. She was then brought up on the famous estate, Užventis⁵²⁴ by her uncle Jonas Smilgevičius, an economist, politician and pioneer of the organization and establishment of economic institutions in Lithuania. She was surrounded by practical and active people, but also by romantic artists such as her cousins, pianist Kazimeras Smilgevičius and singer Antanina Smilgevičius.

After being privately tutored, Irena was sent to Kaunas Private Girls High School, Saulė (Sun), in 1930. Except for painting class, she did not like school and had to repeat many classes. After fifth year she left school.⁵²⁵ Her love of Nature and rural life inclined her to consider art study, but finally she chose the more practical study of agriculture. She graduated in 1939 from the Academy of Agriculture at Dotnuva. During both the Soviet and German occupations of Lithuania, she avoided attention by working anonymously in out-of-the-way places. In 1943 she married engineer Algirdas Jokubauskas. In the following year they escaped to the West and after the war were placed in the Hanau refugee camp where their daughter Danutė was born. The family

⁵²³ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 18 Dec. 1988.

⁵²⁴ The estate became famous in Lithuanian literature after author Šatrijos Ragana used it as the setting for her novel *In the Old Estate*, 1919.

⁵²⁵ At that time there were eight grades in Lithuanian high schools.

migrated to Australia in 1949 and settled in Melbourne. Irena Jokubauskas worked with the Victorian Railways Department, her husband at a tannery at Beechworth. At night he studied engineering part-time and later became municipal engineer for the Altona Shire Council.

In the early sixties, by which time her husband was the family breadwinner and their daughter was at high school, Irena says life became comfortable and she began to paint. In 1964 she became a member of the Victorian Artists Society and until 1983 attended the society's art classes. At first she painted for pleasure and self-expression, but following the sudden death of her husband in 1977, says that art became the goal in her life. Most often she finds inspiration in natural beauty, especially flowers, and sometimes in recollections of her past.

Her art is representational. She admires the work of Frederick McCubbin and Fred Williams but says that the greatest influence on her artistic development has been teacher Karlis Mednis, a realist painter. Jokubauskas's realistic style has romantic traits and colour is of primary importance to her. *The Old Estate*, 1974 (ill. 324), is a realistic-romantic oil painting of the Užventis estate where she spent her childhood. Her soft brush strokes and use of autumn palette endow the picture with nostalgia.

Wind-Blown Blooms, 1970 (ill. 325) is a still life which refers simultaneously to movement and temporality. Against the muted, flowing background the flowers are bright and fresh and placed in an abstract space. Brushstrokes are free and applied with flair and the picture is compositionally well balanced. Her prize-winning work, *Zhivago People*, 1977 (ill. 326), obviously gives expression to her own refugee experiences. Executed with verve, it is freer in technique and much more dramatic than many of her earlier paintings.

Jokubauskas takes an active part in cultural activities of the Lithuanian community. In 1970 she was the organizer of the Young Lithuanian Artists Exhibition held in conjunction with Lithuanian Days. She is a keen supporter of the Lithuanian Choir conducted by her daughter, Danutė Levickas, and designs costumes for its members. She is active also as a member of the Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association. Irena Jokubauskas has participated in a number of exhibitions of the Victorian Artists Society and has been awarded some fourteen prizes. She participates also in Lithuanian art exhibitions. In 1976 she held her first solo exhibition at Lithuanian House in Adelaide.

Painter Danutė Danius⁵²⁶ found time to pursue her art interests only after retirement from full-time work. The elder of the two daughters of Jonas and Ona Sadauskas, she was born in Kybartai in Lithuania on 3 April 1930. Her high school studies were interrupted when the family fled to the West in 1944. They stayed in Schwaebisch Gmünd refugee camp where Danutė completed her secondary education at the Lithuanian High School. Her parents and teachers advised her to continue art studies as her best subjects were drawing and painting. In 1948 the family migrated to Australia and were sent to Melbourne where Danutė worked under contract for two years as a nursing aide. In 1950 she married Vincas Danius. While raising and educating their two children (Saulutė, born 1953 and Andrius, born 1962, both of whom have now completed tertiary education), she worked at the Myer department store, at first as a sales assistant, later as a manageress. During that time the family often visited art galleries, but only occasionally did Danius find time to draw or paint. In about 1975, however, she began to study painting with artist Susan Knight, and since retiring from her sales position in 1981 she has divided her time among painting, voluntary nursing at Heidelberg Hospital, singing in the Lithuanian Choir and playing in the Lithuanian Zither Ensemble.

Danius finds artistic inspiration in Nature, in calm landscapes away from the clamour of the city. She approaches composition and colour in an academic way. *The River*, 1980, is realistically rendered, showing a balanced composition, use of local colours and a sense of rhythm in the placement of the trees. In *The Trees*, 1984 (ill. 327), the rhythm is more pronounced and Danius exhibits a personal and more expressive perception of Nature. Her treatment of the bare branches is somewhat stylized with individual colours, creating an atmosphere of excitement. Danutė Danius is a regular participant in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

FOLK ARTISTS

Melbourne had the largest number -- six women and six men -- of Lithuanian folk artists in Australia. The years following migration to Australia allowed them little time to pursue folk-art activities. Only after establishing their homes or, in some cases, after retirement were people able to work intensively on the production of folk-art items. Over the years, of course, requests were met for special purposes and occasions: community gifts to honour prominent people were generally folk-art items, and a small number were also produced for Lithuanian and Australian exhibitions and for Lithuanian Catholic conventions.

⁵²⁶ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 28 Nov. 1988.

Since the late seventies, with more time available, folk artists have been able to increase their output but are still unable to satisfy demand. Folk-art pieces are highly regarded by members of the Lithuanian community, many of whom prize them as nostalgic reminders of their native land and as revered items. To the artists, however, they generally represent much more: the wood-carvers who produce carved crosses, roofed poles and miniature chapels consider them as national relics and religious objects. They take seriously their mission to continue Lithuanian tradition and, in their desire to pass on their cultural heritage, many of these senior community members demonstrate and teach their art at Lithuanian weekend schools and Scouts gatherings.

The six male folk-art carvers differ not only in style but in output and authenticity. The most prolific are Vytautas Miliauskas, (1909-1992) and Vasylius Jeršovas (1919-1992). Miliauskas's work is simple and close to the Lithuanian ethos; that of Jeršovas is ornately decorative and idiosyncratic. Although Nikas Cininas (1908-1967) produced fewer carvings, his work was true to the folk-art idiom. Brothers Feliksas Ročius, b. 1910 and Alfonsas Ročius, b. 1913, each deviate in some of their work from strictly traditional patterns; they manipulate Lithuanian motifs as elements of contemporary furniture ornamentation. They are unique among Lithuanians in this country in their use of inlay technique. Stasys Eimutis, b. 1916, is the only producer of carved *kanklės* or Lithuanian zithers.

Of the six women folk weavers, only Petė Čerakavičius, b. 1915, adheres faithfully in her woven sashes and other small items to traditional Lithuanian patterns, symbols and colours and their placement and interrelationship. She also is devoted to the task of keeping Lithuanian tradition alive and has offered free weaving lessons to this end. Regina Kaunas, b. 1909, who studied Lithuanian weaving as part of her art training, designs and produces wall hangings, the compositions of which are based on folk-art motifs.

Folk carver **Vytautas Miliauskas** (1909-1992),⁵²⁷ the fifth of the seven children of Edvardas and Mikalina Miliauskas, was born in Gelgaudiškis on 14 November 1909. His parents, both teachers, fled with their children to Russia at the outbreak of World War I and returned to independent Lithuania in 1918. Vytautas grew up in dire post-war hardship and recalls that he often suffered from hunger while studying at high school in Alytus. At school he did well at drawing and carving toys and small utensils in wood. After graduating from Forestry College in 1932 and from the Kaunas Military Academy in 1933, he

⁵²⁷ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 28 Nov. 1988.

worked as a ranger. In 1936 he married Malvina Kapšteinytė and in 1941 participated in the uprising against the Soviets. During both the Russian and German occupations of Lithuania, many young Lithuanian men hid in the forests in order to avoid conscription and deportation. The Germans gave Miliauskas the task of keeping these 'undesirable elements' out of the forest zones, but, rather than obey the Germans, he was able to help about 500 young Lithuanians hiding in the forests near Alsėdžiai to avoid conscription to SS battalions.

In 1944 the Miliauskases fled to Germany where their longest stay was in Schwaebisch Gmünd refugee camp where Vytautas joined a carving class focusing on the traditional Lithuanian craft. In 1949 Miliauskas and his wife migrated to Australia. After his two-year contract as a factory-worker, he worked as a self-employed carpenter until retiring in 1975. He then devoted his time to traditional Lithuanian carving.

Miliauskas's work retained the simplicity and understatement characteristic of Lithuanian folk art. One of the distinctive features of his carvings is the quality of three-dimensionality. He achieved this by turning wood and avoiding the use of flat plywood. Thus his work is endowed with a sculptural, rounded look.

His repertoire consisted of Lithuanian crosses (ill. 328), roofed poles, miniature chapels, distaffs (ill. 329) towelholders and other small, carved pieces. (ill. 330) He followed traditional forms, seldom venturing into individual interpretation. His craftwork is regarded as more authentic than that of many others; his crosses and roofed poles are plain and without very much ornate carving. He was the first in Australia to revive the art of carving towel holders and sash holders. In these, he usually reproduced images of the sun or of the tree of life, as in *Towel Holder*, 1980 (ill. 331).

'Carving draws me and the finished work is my greatest reward', said Miliauskas whose workshop in 1988 was crowded with sketches, designs and carving-in-progress. He was a regular participant in art exhibitions held during Lithuanian Days and Lithuanian Catholic conventions.

Vosylius Jeršovas (1919-1992),⁵²⁸ another carver, was born the second of the six children of Vosylius and Aleksandra Jeršovas, on 27 December 1919 in Ukmerge. He completed his secondary education at Pavasario High School in Kaunas in 1938. His main interest at school, he recalled, was football and he competed in international sports competitions. After leaving school, he worked for the Sports Association of Kaunas. When, in 1941, the Germans patrolled

⁵²⁸ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 26 Nov. 1988.

the streets capturing young men for work in Germany, Jeršovas was among those taken. He absconded three times and was recaptured on each occasion. After World War II he lived in the refugee camp at Ingolstadt where architect Jonas Mulokas organised folk-art carving classes. Quite by chance Jeršovas entered one of the classrooms and was fascinated by the carving process and by folk art. Although he did not join the classes, and continued with football as player and coach, his interest had been aroused. In 1947 Jeršovas married Sofija Kalašauskaitė, a singer in the Čiurlionis Ensemble. While they lived with members of the ensemble in Dillingen, Jeršovas began to carve seriously. In 1949, with his wife and baby daughter Aleksandra, he arrived in Australia. His work contract began at the army barracks in Seymour but a year later he was able to join his family living at Bonegilla refugee camp and, later still, they settled in Melbourne where he worked in a factory. There, Jeršovas's carving output increased over the years, his work inspired by the roofed poles and miniature chapels of his native land.

His carvings consist mainly of Lithuanian crosses, roofed poles, Rūpintojėlis (Sorrowful God) figures and miniature chapels. In the early years his work, although based on Lithuanian folk art, had idiosyncratic features with a tendency towards over-carving and over-ornamentation. Later, he came much closer to the traditional forms, as in *Roofed Pole*, 1962 (ill. 332). In this, the adorning details are kept to a minimum and typical Lithuanian understatement is evident. In *Lithuanian Cross*, 1970 (ill. 333), the sun motif is enlivened by the use of woods of contrasting colours, and the pole by unusual, irregular ornamentation. However, Jeršovas's most original contribution to the Australian Lithuanian folk-art scene was his creation of miniature chapels on driftwood, e.g. *Rūpintojėlis*, 1980 (ill. 334). In this he combined the various elements into an harmonious unit: a statuette of Rūpintojėlis and a rustic roof are set against a driftwood background in the same way that original chapels were usually accommodated in living trees in Lithuanian forests. Jeršovas participated regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions during Lithuanian Days and in other ethnic art and craft shows. In 1972, the Lithuanian Community Council presented three crosses which he had carved to Archbishop Little and to Pope John Paul II. He died after a long illness on 2 August 1992.

Folk artist **Nikas Cininas** (1908-1967)⁵²⁹ was born on 22 May 1908 in the Caucasus. In 1922 the family returned to Lithuania and settled in Šiauliai where he completed high school in 1930. He began to study economics at the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas but later enrolled at the Military

⁵²⁹ Biographical details received from his wife Aldona Cininas, now Narušis, in interview 27 Nov. 1988.

Academy from which he graduated in 1933. In 1944 he fled to the West, eventually arriving at a refugee camp in Munich where he worked as a camp supervisor.

In 1949 he migrated to Australia and settled in Sydney. He completed his two-year work contract with the NSW Transport Department and later continued to work as a train guard. In 1959 he moved to Melbourne where he was one of the founding members of the Lithuanian Theatre for which he designed and executed stage decorations for a number of performances. Talented in drawing, painting and poetry writing, he worked in Australia primarily as a folk-carver. Most of his work comprises traditional Lithuanian crosses and roofed poles, but there are some items with individual variations. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Lithuanian cultural life and held three solo exhibitions of his folk-art carvings: in 1958 at Lithuanian House in Sydney and in 1961 and 1962 at Melbourne Lithuanian House.

Brothers **Feliksas** and **Alfonsas Ročius**⁵³⁰ were born in 1910 and 1913 in **Urvilčiai** village in the county of **Mažeikiai**. When Feliksas was five years old their mother died, leaving seven children. Feliksas, after completing high school studies in **Šviekniai**, enrolled at the Institute of Commerce from which he graduated in 1930, and then began work as an accountant. His brother Alfonsas, after three forms at high school, began work on his father's farm.

In 1944 the two brothers fled to the West. The other members of the family remained at home and were later deported to Siberia where they died. In Germany the brothers' longest stay was at the Seedorf refugee camp in the British zone in northern Germany. Before migrating to Australia in 1948, both completed auto-mechanic and electro-mechanic courses conducted in the camp. Their two-year contracts were carried out timber-cutting in Queensland. Later, they settled near Melbourne where they established a chicken farm.

Both brothers remained unmarried and in their free time began to carve traditional Lithuanian crosses, roofed poles and miniature chapels. They usually combine their talents in the planning and execution of their projects, cutting and joining separate parts to form complete objects. Miniature chapels made by the brothers are embellished with the addition of national emblems, pieces of amber and modified forms of the Christian cross, for instance the cross made up of four tulip buds in *Chapel with Amber*, 1979 (ill. 335). Other ornamental articles, originating from the idea of the miniature chapel, exhibit freer manipulation of single elements and are light, flowing structures in which only the middle section in lighter coloured wood resembles a chapel, e.g. *Tulip*

⁵³⁰ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artists 6 Jan. 1989.

Structure, 1983 (ill. 336). In addition to folk-art items, they have produced original pieces of ornamental furniture. In their tripartite *Candleholder*, 1978 (ill. 337), the traditional symbols of the sun and the tulip are combined to form an unusual, complex entity. By chance the work of the Ročius brothers was seen by Italian marquetry specialists, Pasquale Ceccane and Vincenzo Rosso, formerly of Milan. The Italians introduced a new form of inlay to the Lithuanian carvers who found the new technique much easier to manipulate physically, but requiring more precision, especially in adjusting the hues of the minute particles. Much trial and error was involved in their investigation of the process and led to their invention of a special dye-mix which can be removed without trace by using methylated spirit.

Feliksas and Alfonsas Ročius have executed many Lithuanian themes in inlay technique, producing pictures and decorated furniture. An example is *Vytis*, 1980 (ill. 338). In 1979 they became members of the Marquetry Society of Victoria and since then have participated regularly in annual exhibitions with their decorative furniture such as *Table Top*, 1982 (ill. 339). At the 1982 Whittlesea Agricultural Show they gained first and second prizes for their pictures, and in 1983 were awarded a special prize for *Table Top*. They are regular participants in Lithuanian art exhibitions where they are the only craftsmen in marquetry. Their work is represented in the USA, in South Africa and in Hawaii.

Stasys Eimutis,³³¹ the youngest of three sons, was born in Alytus on 29 April 1916. His father, Simas Eimutis, had returned to Lithuania from the USA where he had fled to avoid compulsory military service of twenty-five years imposed by the Czarist regime. Stasys attended the Alytus Trades College where he learned the properties and uses of various kinds of wood. As well as doing carpentry, he experimented with wooden musical instruments and in 1942 joined the Čiurlionis Folkloric Ensemble in Vilnius as a player of folk instruments. The soft tones of the kanklės³³² -- the Lithuanian zither -- fascinated him and he learned to construct it (ill. 340) and also pipes, reeds, whirrers and trumpets. In the Ensemble he played the whirrer, as kanklės in the Ensemble were played by women.

In 1944 Eimutis fled to Vienna where he was reunited with other members of the Ensemble, two thirds of whose members had left Lithuania. Alfonsas Mikulskis (1909-1983), the founder and leader of the Ensemble

³³¹ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 15 Dec. 1989.

³³² The kanklės is a plucked-stringed instrument on which the number of strings varies from five to twenty-five. The flat box is trapezoidal and is usually decorated with star and sun images.

reorganized it and, under the auspices of the French Government, they toured widely in post-war Germany for five years, singing, dancing and playing. In 1949 Eimutis migrated to Australia and fulfilled a two-year work contract in a glass factory. In 1952 he married, and in the same year completed qualifications to become an electrician. Since 1950 Eimutis has been a crusader in promoting Lithuanian folk instruments. He has constructed and demonstrated them in Scouts camps, weekend schools and at other youth gatherings. Since 1955 he has organized various small ensembles of zither (kankliu) players for whom he constructed the instruments. (ill. 341) He embellishes the zithers with carved Lithuanian folk-art ornaments. He has also taught the art of playing them.

Weaver **Petrė Čerakavičius**,³⁰³ the eldest of five children of Pranas and Juzė Matulaitis, was born on a transit train on 23 August 1918, as her parents were returning to Lithuania from exile in Russia. In 1931 her parents, both factory workers in Kudirkos Naumiesis, experienced financial hardship and although Petrė did well at school, she was sent to Kaunas at the age of thirteen to learn a trade. She became a skilled knitter and established her own workshop. The enterprise was confiscated during the 1940 Russian invasion and, as a business proprietor, she was labelled an 'enemy of the people.' In 1944 she fled to Germany and, during her stay at the Wedel refugee camp, married Vytautas Čerakavičius. In 1949 she and her husband and their three children migrated to Australia. While he worked in various places on his labour contract she and her children lived in reception camps. In the Uranquinty (NSW) camp she was taught by Genovaitė Kepalas to weave sashes and has continued this craft throughout her life.

In 1952 the family settled in Geelong. She continued to participate in Lithuanian art exhibitions, in the annual Geelong Ethnic Festivals and at Technical College displays where she gives public demonstrations of weaving. (ill. 342) She says that, since her children have grown up, she has felt a strong mission to pursue her craft in order to 'leave something worthwhile to the world.' Čerakavičius also belongs to the Geelong Chess Club and has won a number of competition trophies. In 1979 she was the Victorian champion woman chess player.

Regina Kaunas,³⁰⁴ *née* Eidintaite, also a weaver, was born at Veiveriai in Lithuania on 26 February 1909. During World War I her father, lawyer Kazimieras Eidintas, fled with his family to Russia, returning to independent

³⁰³ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 26 Dec. 1989.

³⁰⁴ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 18 Dec. 1989.

Lithuania in 1921 and later becoming a judge in Kelmė. Regina completed eleventh form at Šiauliai High School where her favourite subjects were art and music. In 1927 she enrolled at the School of Music⁵³⁵ to study piano. After her marriage to Dr. Izidorius Kaunas they moved to Vilkaviškis where she began painting and weaving in her spare time. In 1944 with their daughter Irena, born in 1931, they fled to the West. Their longest stay was in Salzburg in Austria where Dr. Kaunas worked as a medical officer in an Austrian hospital. After the war they moved to Freiburg-im-Breisgau in southern Germany where Regina Kaunas enrolled at L'École des Arts et Métiers to study weaving. Her husband taught anatomy there, although still working at a French hospital. Weaving classes were conducted at the art school by Anastazija and Antanas Tamošaitis, respected authorities on Lithuanian folk art and the authors of many books on folk costume, woven sashes, egg-decoration and other artistic expressions of Lithuanian culture. Here, Regina Kaunas learned not only the theory of Lithuanian folk art but also the principles of weaving and natural dyeing techniques used in making rugs and wall-hangings.

In 1949 the Kaunas family migrated to Australia and spent their two-year contracts as cleaners at the Maibyrnong Migrant Hostel. In 1951 they settled in Melbourne where Regina Kaunas worked in the Kodak film laboratories. 'With every visit to art exhibitions the desire to weave was aroused in me', she says, but it was not until her husband had completed his medical examinations in 1959 that she was able to continue her art. Since Dr. Kaunas's death in 1985, she has devoted her time fully to weaving rugs and wall-hangings. Kaunas's wall-hangings are designed with Lithuanian folk-art themes as their basis. Her compositions are geometric and formal. In some she rhythmically repeats the same motif, as for instance when she creates the illusion of a flowering meadow in *Wallhanging*, 1983 (ill. 343). In other wallhangings she develops a central motif, as in *The Tree of Life*, 1985 (ill. 344). This is a popular motif in weaving and also in painting Lithuanian glory-boxes and symbolises the regenerative power of life. Kaunas uses the Persian Knot technique in her weaving and although her rich colours are sombre, the overall effect is one of cheerfulness and lightness.

Birutė Vaitkus⁵³⁶ is unique in her translation of paintings by Lithuanian artists into woven tapestries. Born Birutė Šarkytė on 19 February 1932, Vaitkus spent her early years in the Lithuanian section of Klaipėda. When in 1939 the Germans seized the Klaipėda district, her father, Pranas Šarkis, a bank manager, fled with his wife and three children to the rural district of Mažeikiai.

⁵³⁵ In 1933 re-named the Conservatorium of Music.

⁵³⁶ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 29 Jan. 1989.

There, Birutė attended school and came into contact with relatives living on nearby farms. Their weaving fascinated and impressed her. In 1944, the Šarkis family fled to the West and after the war were placed in a refugee camp in Denmark. There, Lithuanian primary and secondary school classes were organized, and in 1949 Birutė graduated from high school. She remembers that one of the great pleasures of camp life was reading Lithuanian illustrated children's books and magazines which her parents purchased from the USA.

In 1949 the family migrated to Australia where they were assigned to work in different parts of the continent. Birutė worked as a waitress, and eventually the family was able to come together to live in Geelong. In 1951 she married Vytautas Vaitkus, a mechanical engineer. After an initial settling-down period, Birutė Vaitkus began to weave, 'probably', she says 'because of nostalgic reminiscences.' In 1971 she held her first solo exhibition of woven wallhangings at the Malvern Art Gallery in Victoria. Public admiration of her work encouraged her to begin experimenting with new compositions and techniques. Her wallhanging, *Bird of Freedom*, 1970 (ill. 345), is a symbolic expression of her flight to freedom. With few images -- a lone bird and the crests of waves -- she creates, with sombre colours using a gobelin technique, a mood of longing and hope. From childhood she has admired the paintings of Lithuanian artist Šimonis, and she has reproduced a number of them in gobelin weaving. *Morning*, 1982 (ill. 346), is a close reproduction of Šimonis's cubistic painting and required careful dyeing of the wool in order to obtain the hues of the original work.

Malvina Miliuskas⁵³⁷ was born in Nendriniai village in the Sasnava county of Lithuania on 17 September 1917. Her parents, Adomas and Morta Kapteinis, were wealthy farmers. In 1933 Malvina enrolled at the School of Applied Craft in Kaunas from which she graduated in 1936. In that year she married Vytautas Miliuskas. In 1944 they fled to Germany from where, in 1949, they migrated to Australia. In her woven items such as sashes and table runners, Malvina Miliuskas follows traditional folk-art designs and colours; in embroidery and mosaics she executes her own designs, as in her mosaic *The Poppies*, 1975 (ill. 347). Her themes are generally flowers reproduced in vivid colours.

Danutė Simankevičius⁵³⁸ was born on 30 January 1922 in Kudirkos Naumiestis to Juozas and Juzė Matulaitis, both of whom were teachers. While still attending high school in Kybartai, she developed a strong interest in the

⁵³⁷ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 28 Nov. 1988.

⁵³⁸ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 29 Nov. 1987.

idiomatic and historic characteristics of the Lithuanian language and began to widen her knowledge of folk traditions. In 1940 she enrolled at the Academy of Agriculture in Dotnuva. Her father died in 1944 at the time when Russian troops were invading Lithuania and she and her mother fled to Tübingen in southern Germany. There she first became active in the Lithuanian Women Social Workers Association, an organization under the auspices of the International Red Cross.

In 1949 she arrived in Melbourne where she worked as a nursing aide at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. In 1951 she married artist Viktoras Simankevičius. In 1952 she founded the Melbourne branch of the Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Association and was its president for the next two years. She and her husband raised two sons: Almis, born 1954 and Mindaugas, born 1956. After qualifying as a teacher of science and mathematics, she taught at Lakeside High School for twenty-three years, all the while working to promote a wider appreciation of Lithuanian folk art. At the school she organized annually a Lithuanian Week which included folk-art exhibitions, folk-dancing and folksong concerts and a gala Lithuanian dinner. This custom continued at Lakeside even after her retirement from teaching in 1987, but in more recent years has become International Week.

Danutė Simankevičius's major Lithuanian folk-art interests are national costume and egg decoration. She has organized several displays of national costumes for the Australian public and has promoted the custom of decorating eggs by co-ordinating and teaching at annual Easter workshops. She is the author of *Lithuanian Easter Eggs: A Technical Approach*, 1985, which is illustrated with photographs of Easter eggs in traditional designs. (ill. 348)

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTING ARTISTS

Many Lithuanians in Melbourne have provided artistic support for theatrical performances and commemorative events on numerous occasions. Four people in particular have been especially generous and reliable.

One of these is set designer, musician and actor Aleksandras Gabas⁵³⁹ who was born on 21 August 1922 into the family of Danielius and Juozapa (*nee* Urbaitytė) Gabeckas in Šiauliai. In 1941 he completed secondary studies at Šiauliai High School where his favourite subjects had been sport, music with teacher Juozas Strolia (1897-1969) and art with teacher Juozas Jankus, b.1912,

⁵³⁹ This is an abbreviation of his original surname Gabeckas. Biog/ed details given in letter to author 2 Dec. 1991.

who was also a theatrical set decorator. While at high school he also studied at the Šiauliai Theatre Studio. Gabas later began engineering studies at the University of Vytautas the Great.

In 1944 he fled to the West, eventually moving to the camp at Seedorf in Germany where he was active as theatre decorator, actor and musician. In 1947, he was among the first Baltic refugees to migrate to Australia. During the voyage on the *General Heinzelman*, Gabas was a member of musical group organized by Petras Morkūnas. Gabas spent his two-year work contract as a miner in Zeehan in Tasmania. During this time he renewed acquaintance with Olegas Truchanas and together they helped establish the Hobart Fencing Club. In 1950 Gabas moved to Melbourne where he studied Fine Arts at Melbourne University and painting at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He has also been active in sport, in the Scouts organization, in various musical groups and in theatre design. He varies the style of theatrical sets to suit particular performances. In 1951, for example, for *Jūratė and Kastytis* by the Dana Nasvytis Dance School, he painted a backdrop depicting the Baltic Sea and enlivened it by specially controlled lighting. (ill. 349)

In 1953 he made the set decorations for Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tale *Kelionės draugas* (Comrade of the Journey); and in 1957 for the comedy, *Teta iš Amerikos* (The Aunt from America) by J. Audronis, which had repeat performances in 1977, 1978, 1983 and 1984. In 1984 Gabas constructed the stage properties for the play, *Amerika pirtyje* (America in a Bathhouse, ill. 350) and in 1987 he was responsible for the design and production of the costumes and set for the drama, *Eglės namai* (The House of Eglė), by Gražina Mareckaite.

Another artist who has contributed her talents in the support of community activities is producer, playwright and stage designer Alisa Baltrukonis,⁵⁴⁰ nee Šmitaitė. Born on 12 July 1920, she enjoyed poetry, literature and drawing at school. In 1939 she married Vincas Baltrukonis and a year later their son Bernardas was born. In 1944 the family fled to the West and stayed at Hanover refugee camp in Germany until 1949 when they migrated to Australia. After settling in Melbourne, Alisa Baltrukonis worked as a seamstress. In 1952 she gave birth to a daughter, Sabina,⁵⁴¹ and for the next seventeen years was occupied with family commitments and caring for her sick mother.

From 1969 she began to participate actively in Lithuanian community life. At first she undertook theatrical roles and, in 1975, on the occasion of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation's convention in Melbourne, she adapted for the

⁵⁴⁰ Biogged details recorded during interview with the artist 29 Dec. 1988.

⁵⁴¹ Sabina Baltrukonis now lives in the USA and works as a documentary film producer.

theatre a didactic short story, *Bičiuliai* (The Friendly Neighbours), written by Bishop Motiejus Valančius. As well as writing and producing the play, she painted the set decor. In the following year, she directed *Sekminių vainikas* (The Wreath of Pentecost, ill. 351) a play by Antanas Gustaitis, and was responsible also for the set decorations. In 1977, to commemorate the centenary of the death of playwright Šatrijos Ragana, Baltrukonis adapted Ragana's humorous short story *Kraitis* (Dowry) for the stage. Her stage sets consist of properties realistically rendered and often with painted backdrops. During the eighties Baltrukonis has concentrated her energies on organizational and social activities within the Lithuanian community.

Painter, set designer-decorator and singer **Bronius Žiedas** (1911-1975)⁵⁴² also gave freely of his talents to enhance community activities. He was born into a large farming family in Garneliai village in the county of Utena on 11 January 1911. He led a carefree, joyful lifestyle and is said to have seldom taken anything seriously or to have kept notes or records. Consequently, very little is known about his life. His son Šarūnas believes that in 1937 Žiedas studied singing in Paris and spent much time admiring the work of the Renaissance painters exhibited at the Louvre Museum. In 1944, Žiedas fled from Lithuania, eventually arriving at the refugee camp in Wiesbaden. There he married and two children were later born. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia where Bronius Žiedas carried out a two-year work contract with the Railways Department and his family lived at the Somers (Victorian) migrant camp. He later worked as a retoucher in a photographic laboratory. In 1959, he and his wife were divorced and in 1971 Žiedas married ballet teacher Grace Constable.

Žiedas's realistic, romantic landscapes were painted for his own pleasure and portraits of friends were done at their request. He used a dark palette, smooth brushstrokes and a tonal technique, e.g. *Landscape*, undated (ill. 352). On occasions, he also designed and executed stage sets and properties, among them the set in 1968 for *Trys Broliai* (The Three Brothers), by Pranas Pusedėris. He participated a number of times in the *Sun* outdoor art exhibitions. Bronius Žiedas died in Melbourne on 2 June 1975.

Stasys Čižauskas (1926-1981),⁵⁴³ decorator, playwright, composer and teacher, was another contributor to community activities, especially within the Catholic group. He was born, one of five children, to Vincas and Ona

⁵⁴² Biographical details given by his son, Šarūnas 1989.

⁵⁴³ Biographical details recorded during interviews at various times with personal acquaintances of the artist.

Čižauskas in 1926 in Šikšniai village in the county of Vilkaviškis. At Kybartai High School his interest in literature was encouraged by his teacher, Balsys, and he was a promising poet and singer. In 1944, on completion of high school studies, he fled alone to the West where, after the war, he was accommodated in the Weiden refugee camp in Bavaria. There he worked with Algirdas Kudirka in preparing stage decor for Lithuanian theatrical shows in the camp.

Čižauskas migrated to Australia in 1949 and carried out his work contract at a machinery factory in Geelong, Victoria. In 1951 he moved to Melbourne where, after working as a house-painter for ten years, he became the proprietor of a supermarket. In 1956 he married Danutė Lazutkaitė who has been active as a Scouts leader, and they have two daughters.

Čižauskas was active in the Melbourne Lithuanian community as a stage decorator, playwright, composer and teacher. He adopted the pseudonym Akivara and in 1956 wrote two short musical plays, *Moderni Pelenė* (Modern Cinderella) and *Laimė* (Luck); in 1960 he wrote two one-act comedies, *USA* and *Televizija* (Television). These were followed in 1961 by a comedy, *Ponas daktaras Skambutis* (Doctor Bell) and in 1963, by a short musical entitled *Barbecue*. From 1952 to 1956 Čižauskas was conductor of the *Skersvėjis* (Draught) a male musical group whose numbers fluctuated between three and six and which performed his humorous compositions on various occasions. Between 1970 and 1977 he taught singing at the Lithuanian Catholic Weekend School.

MELBOURNE: AN OVERVIEW

It can be seen that, in the early years after settling in Melbourne, the Lithuanian community developed an intense programme of cultural activity. Many artists became involved, not only in organizing art exhibitions but also in establishing Lithuanian cultural associations. Unlike Lithuanian artists in Sydney who began early to be involved in the Australian mainstream, artists in Melbourne were divided in their affiliation: although some joined the Australian mainstream, others worked exclusively within the Lithuanian community, while several isolated themselves from both groups. Following professional appointments, a number including Zikaras, Jomantas and Cleveland, became preoccupied and had very little time for community involvement. The only artist of the Vanguard group who remained closely associated with the Lithuanian community was Vaičaitis who became a community leader and a prolific writer on art. Delayed-group artist Adomas Vingis, inhibited by a lack of self-assurance from becoming part of the Australian mainstream, was a devoted worker within the

Lithuanian community as organizer, president of numerous committees and the person largely responsible for the decoration of Melbourne's Lithuanian House.

In the sixties, first-generation artistic activities began to wane but a decade later were invigorated by the work of a number of folk artists. About this time, too, and unlike the situation elsewhere in Australia, second-generation Lithuanians in Melbourne began to assume active roles in community cultural life. Soon after Danutė Levickas took over as the second-generation conductor of the Melbourne mixed choir, *Daina*, a number of small musical and theatrical bodies emerged on the initiative of second-generation members who showed themselves to be particularly cohesive and co-ordinated, especially in the production of their quarterly journal *Jaužiniai*. This cooperation exists also among the large number⁵⁴⁴ -- fourteen -- of Australian-born visual artists in Melbourne. The active role played by younger members of the community is probably the reason that Melbourne is now regarded by most as the cultural centre of Lithuanian life in Australia.

The work of most individual artists has undergone noticeable changes. Artists of the first generation tended to experiment until they arrived at an individual idiom, Jomantas being an outstanding example, while Zikaras made only slight changes in his style.

Unlike most Sydney artists who are regularly featured in the national Lithuanian press -- published in Sydney -- those in Melbourne have received much less press coverage and, hence, are not as widely known. This imbalance is now being somewhat redressed, especially in the case of second-generation artists whose activities are being reported regularly in *Jaužiniai*.

⁵⁴⁴ As compared to five in Sydney and one in Adelaide.

CHAPTER 6

LITHUANIANS IN ADELAIDE

*My country! What a lovely land
 I left and lost so suddenly!
 No words are there that could express
 My anguish flowing turbidly!*

Pranas Vaičiaitis (1876-1901)
 (Translated by Dorian Rottenberg)

In January 1948, the first of the World War II Lithuanian migrants arrived in Adelaide.⁵⁴⁵ The group consisted of forty-eight single men whose average age was twenty-three.⁵⁴⁶ By the end of 1948 about one thousand Lithuanians were living in Adelaide, including several young, single women and a number of young, childless couples. By January 1951, the number had risen to two thousand.⁵⁴⁷ Lithuanian numbers remained for several years at this level but in the late fifties declined to about fifteen hundred when many moved either to other Australian states or to the USA. Among Lithuanian migrants in Adelaide there was a higher proportion than in other Australian cities of people with tertiary qualifications, including lawyers and medical practitioners. There was also a greater number of established artists, musicians, writers and playwrights. Adelaide was the only Lithuanian 'colony' to form a Theatre-Studio group; and this, to a great extent, became the centre of the city's Lithuanian cultural life until the late seventies.

Cultural activity among the first arrivals began while they were housed at Bedford Park military barracks: in 1948 an *ad hoc* choir was formed to celebrate Lithuanian Independence Day. However, organized and substantial cultural activities required more time and more people: some activities, such as vocal and folk-dance groups, were formed spontaneously but the setting-up of others, such as the Community Council, required specific initiative.

⁵⁴⁵ Years later, it was learned that several Lithuanians had settled in Adelaide after World War I. It is unlikely that either group was aware of the other's presence at this time.

⁵⁴⁶ Vladas Radzavičius and Pranas Puskešis in *Metrašius*. Vol. 1, p. 138

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 139

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

On 2 January 1949, Jonas Mockūnas played a major role in forming the Lithuanian Cultural Society and became its first president. Its initial task was to organize celebrations for Lithuanian Independence Day on 16 February of that year. These took place among newly acquired Australian friends with a small Lithuanian male choir and folk-dance group performing. At the end of 1949 the Lithuanian Cultural Society became the Adelaide branch of the Australian Lithuanian Community and was in the hands of an elected council with a two-year term of office. Its main aims were to co-ordinate all Lithuanian organizations in South Australia, to set up weekend schools for the younger members of the community, to organize commemorative and cultural events and to represent the Lithuanian community in Adelaide society. Later, additional tasks were undertaken on special occasions, e.g. during Lithuanian Days festivals it was necessary for accommodation to be arranged for large numbers of visitors from other parts of Australia. A decade later, the task of looking after distinguished overseas guests, soloists and sports groups added further responsibilities, not only in the provision of accommodation but also, where relevant, in finding suitable performance venues. One of the lasting achievements of the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council was the purchase in 1951 of a property to be called Lithuanian House.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Musical Groups

The 1948 male choir at Bedford Park migrant camp was organized by Jonas Pareigis.⁵⁴⁸ Another male choir was organized in 1949 by conductor Vaclovas Šimkus, and in 1950 a mixed choir, Lithuania, of about forty singers was formed. From its inception, Lithuania sang at all major Lithuanian cultural events and participated regularly in Lithuanian Days festivals. It performed also for the Australian public during arts festivals and on various occasions for charitable organizations, hospitals, associations for the blind and in homes for the aged. Small vocal units, such as Jonas Zdanavičius's short-lived mixed double quartet in 1951 and other short-lived quartets and octets, occasionally toured other Lithuanian communities. At that time, several Lithuanian opera singers were living in Adelaide: these included sopranos Antanina Gučius, Elena Rūkštelė and Genovaitė Vasiliauskas, and baritone and actor Paulius Rūtenis. Violinists

⁵⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 147

Pranas Matiukas and Vytautas Fledžinskas also supplemented the choir's repertoire with solo performances. These soloists and the Zdanavičius double quartet performed regularly for several years on local radio. In the late fifties, solo performances became fewer and the quartet ceased to exist. In 1969 Vaclovas Šimkus moved to Canberra and Genovaitė Vasiliauskas replaced him as conductor of the choir, Lithuania. She also began to train conductors from among younger members of the community, notably Vytautas Straukas, b. 1944, a high school teacher, and Rasa Kubilius, at that time a student at the Conservatorium of Music.

In 1965 some female music-lovers formed a quartet, *Nemuno dukros* (Daughters of the River Nemunas) led by Anelė Umevičius. In 1967, a male octet, *Klajūnai* (The Wanderers) was formed with Genovaitė Vasiliauskas as conductor. She also organized and trained a school-girls' choir, *Eglutės* (The Fir Trees), and in the late eighties, with Bronė Lapšys, formed a senior Lithuanian women's ensemble.

Folk-dance Groups

The first Lithuanian folk-dance group in Adelaide was organized in January 1949 by Viktoras Ratkevičius. Over time members and leaders changed; among the latter were Bronė Lapšys and Marija Baronaitė-Greblūnas. In 1969 the group was named *Žilvinas* and its leadership was taken over by Vytautas Straukas, a former student of the early leaders. In 1975 Vytas Vencius became leader; more recently Bronius Sabeckis. A small orchestra was incorporated into the group and the ensemble has performed for Australian audiences, at ethnic concerts, at festivals, on television, at schools and for various charitable organizations.

Lithuanian Theatre

In March 1949 Elena Dainius and Paulius Rūtenis organized a Lithuanian Theatre-Lovers Group in Adelaide. In 1951 this was re-organized and became the Lithuanian Theatre-Studio.⁵⁴⁹ Its leader was playwright and producer Juozas Gučius (1903-1978). His Theatre-Studio offered studies of plays and characters and the art of acting. The goal was to produce at least one play a year. Between 1951 and 1961 twenty-three plays were staged; from 1962 to 1982, thirty plays. The Theatre-Studio, later called *Vaidila* (Bard), involved many people in

⁵⁴⁹ Jonas Neverauskas in *Meistrašius*, Vol. 2, pp. 158-163; Vol. 1, p. 147

play production, among them artists who carried out stage decoration. The theatre was a popular institution among Lithuanians. Vaidila not only introduced the art of acting to younger people but also fostered in them enthusiasm for theatrical performances.

Lithuanian Museum

In 1961 Jonas Vanagas (1916-1989) established the Lithuanian Museum at Lithuanian House in the inner-suburb of Norwood. It is unique in Australia and comprises a variety of exhibits: manuscripts, books, medals, trophies, amber, paintings, folk-art items, national costumes, various uniforms from Lithuania's period of independence and a diversity of personal items formerly belonging to prominent people from the past. Over the years it has become widely known and is now visited by Australian school groups and parties of tourists. Prior to establishing the Lithuanian Museum, Vanagas had set up the Lobenthal (S.A.) Historical Museum which focuses on nineteenth-century German settlement in the town. In appreciation of his work, the South Australian Government conferred honorary citizenship of Lobenthal.

Lithuanian Library

Books, collected and donated by many people, were gathered into a library which in 1957 was given permanent accommodation at Lithuanian House.⁵⁵⁰ In 1962 it was officially named the J.J. Bačiūnas Library in honour of Lithuanian millionaire and patron Juozas Bačiūnas who in that year visited Australia from the USA. The library has over one hundred regular borrowers.

Lithuanian Cultural Foundation

This was established by painter Antanas Rūkštelė as a branch of the Melbourne-based Lithuanian Cultural Foundation.⁵⁵¹ Its purposes were to set programmes for weekend schools; to stimulate interest in Lithuanian culture by the establishment of awards for literary works, especially by younger writers; to nurture the formation of musical, theatrical and folkdance groups; and to organize art exhibitions. The leadership of the Foundation was initially in the hands of artists: in 1952 and 1954, Antanas Rūkštelė, its founder, was

⁵⁵⁰ Nata Alvikienė in *40 metų*, p. 68

⁵⁵¹ Antanas Krausas in *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, pp. 70-71

president; in 1953, painter Mečys Rudzenskas; in 1955, painter Stasys Neliubšys; in 1956, painter Leonas Žygas. In 1957 and 1958, several painters were council committee members. They organized some ten art exhibitions and concerts, delivered lectures on Lithuanian culture, art and history, painted stage decorations and collected approximately two hundred books for the library. In 1958, after many members had moved to the USA, the Foundation ceased to exist and its functions were taken over by the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council.

Lithuanian Press

The first Lithuanian newspaper in Australia, *Australijos lietuvis* (The Australian Lithuanian) was established in 1948 by Jurgis Glušauskas-Armonas in Leigh Creek in South Australia and a year later transferred to Adelaide. Published fortnightly, it contained news and current affairs, short stories, excerpts from major Lithuanian novels and articles on art and music.⁵⁵² In 1949, each edition was up to forty pages in length. In 1956, after 199 issues, *Australijos Lietuvis* ceased publication. The closure coincided with the establishment of a new Catholic weekly, *Tėviškės Aidai* (Echoes of Homeland) in Melbourne. For four years, Lithuanians in Adelaide were without a local newspaper and many felt the need for better communication. In 1960 the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council began publication of a local fortnightly bulletin, *Adelaidės Lietuvių Žinios* (Adelaide Lithuanian News), which for many years was edited by Petras Bielskis. Since 1985, Antanas Šerelis has published a monthly magazine, *Australijos lietuvių pensininkų bičiulis* (The Australian Lithuanian Pensioners' Friend), an advisory and instructive publication for pensioners.

Lithuanian Weekend School

In 1949 Father Povilas Jatulis organized twenty-one children and began school work in St. Joseph's Church Hall.⁵⁵³ Former teachers willingly taught Lithuanian language and history, without textbooks and according to personal interpretation. Not until 1954 did the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation prescribe programmes adapted to exile conditions and provide basic textbooks imported from the USA. The programmes were made more appealing by the inclusion of lessons in weaving, carving, singing and folkdancing and by the staging of plays. In 1957 the Weekend School was relocated to the newly acquired

⁵⁵² Julius Veteikis, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 119-125

⁵⁵³ Radzevičius and Pudešris, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 138-142

Lithuanian House in Norwood. The number of students reached sixty and, until 1982, they were taught by some fifty teachers, twenty-four of whom were former Weekend School students. The longest serving teacher was Vladas Statnickas, b. 1915, who was also president of the school committee and acted as teacher for twenty-six years. Between 1962 and 1982 the school produced twelve plays, staged in Adelaide, and sang in a children's choir in 1974 and 1980 during Lithuanian Days, as well as in concerts organized by the Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia. From 1975 the school received grants from the State government, and since 1981 from the Federal government.

Lithuanian Language Course

The course was established in 1975 and designed as a Higher School Certificate subject. It receives Federal government funding and has been approved by the state Education Department. In Adelaide the course is directed by Izolda Davies who is assisted by ten other teachers. From 1975 to 1982 the Course was undertaken by fifty-three students.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Sport

In Adelaide, as in other Lithuanian communities, the most popular and largest youth organization is the Sports Club.⁵⁵⁴ Basketball was played by young people from the early days of arrival in Australia, and formal organization of the Sporto klubas Vytis (Lithuanian Sports Club Vytis) took place in 1950. Basketball remains the most popular sport, attracting some fifty active players. In the early fifties the Woodville Lithuanian team won the South Australian title in basketball. Various teams have competed during Lithuanian and Australian sports festivals over the years.

Scouting

In 1949, sixty young people formed the Adelaide branch of the Lithuanian Scouts Organization which was named Vilnius. The main attractions of this organization are camping and campfire evenings with singing and acting.

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 126

During jamborees, scouts improve their facility with the Lithuanian language and learn a little about Lithuanian history and customs.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In 1952, Lithuanian women in Adelaide formed a Women's Society affiliated with the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council. Its first president was Elena Reisonas, a former lawyer. From its formation, the society organized charity balls, picnics and fashion parades and catered for various functions at Lithuanian House. Money raised was used for many purposes: to assist the sick, both local and those still in German camps, and to support cultural and youth organizations such as weekend schools and Scouts groups. In 1981, the Women's Society registered as a charitable organization and became known as the South Australian Lithuanian Women's Society Incorporated. Its members are women of the first generation, as the younger women are not as willing to work in voluntary organizations.

ADELAIDE LITHUANIAN ALLIANCE INCORPORATED

As in other Australian cities, the general Lithuanian community in Adelaide has always been somewhat informal in its organization. There is a Community Code outlining aims and membership is automatic for all Lithuanian-born persons and the community *per se* is not registered as an official body. In order to have legal rights to purchase property, an incorporated body was formed. At an extraordinary meeting in 1955, the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council formed the Adelaide Lithuanian Alliance Incorporated with Vaclovas Raginis elected as its first president.⁵⁵⁵ The primary objective was to purchase a building to become a Lithuanian House. On 24 October 1955, the official documents of incorporation were received. In 1957 the corporate body purchased a former church building at 6-8 Eastry Street in Norwood and began transforming it into the Lithuanian House. Architect Karolis Reisonas designed the re-construction, the work was carried out mainly by volunteers and interior decoration was completed by artists Algirdas Kudirka, Stasys Neliubšys and Pranas Savenis. By 1966 the original floor space had been enlarged threefold. In 1972 a neighbouring property was purchased and the land made into a parking lot. Lithuanian House became the principal venue for Lithuanian activities: rehearsals, meetings, conventions, celebrations and Lithuanian Days events. As

⁵⁵⁵ Petras Bielskis, *ibid.* Vol. 2, pp. 119-125

well, the Lithuanian Weekend School, the library and the museum are accommodated there. Maintenance costs are covered by proceeds from the dining-room and bar and from donations.

LITHUANIAN CATHOLICS IN ADELAIDE

Lithuanian Catholics constitute the largest single group within Adelaide's Lithuanian Community. In 1950 they formed the Lithuanian Catholic Society which in 1954 became the Lithuanian Catholic Federation. Its primary aim is to 'foster allegiance to the Catholic faith.' In 1953, Father Povilas Jatulis established the Catholic weekly bulletin, *Šventadienio balsas* (Sunday Voice) which continues to inform on religious happenings in Adelaide. In 1960, a steering committee under the leadership of Fr. Jatulis purchased a large building complex in St. Peters and received permission from Archbishop Beovich to establish a church within the complex. This continues to be the only Lithuanian church in Australia and is named after the Lithuanian saint, Kazimieras. Within the building, accommodation was provided for Fr. Jatulis and, later, for Fr. Albinas Spurgis. A library and bookshop are housed there, and organizations such as the Catholic Women's Society and the St. Kazimieras Catholic Weekend School operate there. The school is managed by a committee of parents and teachers of whom Elena Varnas was the first and longest-serving. As well she was the producer of about twenty school plays. In 1960, a church choir of some twenty singers was formed with Vaclovas Šimkus as its first conductor. Since 1969 pianist Nemyra Masiulytė-Stapleton has been conductor. The costs of maintaining the large complex are covered partly from proceeds from functions but mainly from donations and bequests of parishioners.⁵⁵⁶

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

About fifty Lithuanian organizations have existed in Adelaide at various times. Among these have been professional and para-professional associations - of teachers, lawyers, medical and dental practitioners, architects and engineers, foresters and students. Each has been limited in membership and activity, but at times has found ways to use its professional experience to benefit the Lithuanian community, e.g. the Lithuanian Lawyers Organization, comprising some twenty former lawyers, has drafted rules for various Lithuanian organizations. In everyday life, members of the Lawyers Association worked in

⁵⁵⁶ Pusešius, *ibid*, Vol. 2, pp. 112-117, 150

unskilled jobs; however only one re-studied law, partly because the subject requires an extremely sound knowledge of English, and partly because of family commitments which gave top priority to the education of children. The knowledge and skill of other professional people are only occasionally applicable to the needs of the Lithuanian community: in specific instances, individuals have given lectures, written articles for the press, prepared building and renovation plans and so on. Probably the most valuable contribution has been made by teachers who have undertaken responsibility for the education of Lithuanian children at weekend schools from the early post-war period until the present time.

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN ADELAIDE

VANGUARD ARTISTS

Lithuanian artists who settled in Adelaide in the early post-war period comprised the largest number in Australia with completed formal art training. Chief among them were painter Antanas Rūkštelė, b. 1906, sculptor Aleksandras Marčiulionis, b. 1911 and ceramist Eleonora Marčiulionis, b. 1912, all of whom had qualifications from Lithuanian art institutions. Also in Adelaide were sculptors Balys Milaknis, b. 1915 and Balys Grėbliūnas (1907-1963), both graduates from L'École des Arts et Métiers. Art photographer Vytautas Vosylius (1912-1990) and cartoonist Borisas Borjeras, b. 1910, had also completed art training before their arrival in Adelaide.

A number of other Vanguard artists, generally with lesser training, also settled in Adelaide. They were painter Leonas Žygas, painter and scenographer Stasys Neliubšys, painter, sculptor and stained-glass artist Jonas Rudzinskas and photographer Alfonsas Budrys.

As in Melbourne, no associations, societies or coteries of artists were formed, but unlike the Lithuanian artists elsewhere in Australia, those in Adelaide divided themselves into three distinct sub-groups: artists with completed art training, those only partly trained and those whose main interest was in art photography.

Artists with Completed Qualifications

As well as being dominant in the artistic and social life of the Lithuanian community of the early fifties the trained artists became members of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and were eager to investigate the Australian art scene. The National Gallery of South Australia in the late forties and early fifties was able to display examples of 19th century British paintings, some work by artists of the Heidelberg School, a number of contemporary paintings by Drysdale, Nolan and Tucker as well as works by South Australian artists Hans Heysen, Jacqueline Hick and Margaret Preston. The Heysen landscapes were particularly appealing to conservative Lithuanian painters such as Rūkštelė, although all admired the way in which this Australian master captured the grandeur of Nature in a spirit close to the Lithuanian ethos.

The Lithuanian sculptors were disappointed that sculpture was so neglected that it was not taught at that time at the South Australian School of Art. It seemed to them, too, that ceramics was regarded by Adelaide artists as a craft rather than as a high or serious art form. The trained Lithuanian artists immediately began artistic activity, even while still carrying out their compulsory work contracts.

The most active of the trained artists was **Antanas Rūkštelė**⁵⁵⁷ who arrived in Australia with an established reputation as a painter, author and founder of an art school in Germany. Soon after reaching Adelaide in 1949 he was elected president of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation based in Melbourne, and from 1950 to 1952 was president of the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council.

Born on 22 October 1906, in the village of Degučiai in the county of Zarasai, he supported himself by working at the Kaunas Museum while studying at high school evening classes and the Kaunas School of Art. He completed high school study in 1928 and the following year graduated from art school with a major in painting. He enrolled at the Military Academy and graduated in 1930. During 1928 and 1929 he also studied at the Conservatorium of Music. In 1934 he studied ethnology and museology at the Baltiska Institutet in Stockholm. For his practical work during this time he was awarded the King of Sweden Medal. On return to Kaunas he founded and became Director of the Ethnographic Department of the Museum of Culture in Kaunas. In 1943 he graduated in Art History from the University of Vilnius. During the summer months he organized field trips to collect ethnographic material and projected the idea of what would have been the first ethnographic

⁵⁵⁷ Biogved details given by the artist's daughter Eglė, 6 July 1988 and in *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 26, pp. 103-104

outdoor museum in Lithuania. He was also a prolific writer of articles and essays on folk art. He was the author of *Lietuvių tautodailė* (Lithuanian Folk Art), published in 1929, and *Vilniaus kryžiai* (Crosses of the Region of Vilnius), published in 1937. In 1932 he was secretary of the Independent Artists Society, and from 1941 to 1944 secretary of the Artists of Lithuania Society.

In 1944, with his wife, *nee* Elena Valiušytė, an opera singer, and their three children, Rūkštelė fled to Germany. Two years later he established an art school in Dillingen refugee camp and was its director and teacher until 1949. In that year, the family migrated to Australia. During the sea voyage, Rūkštelė organized a Lithuanian choir which, after arrival in Australia, continued to sing at the Woodside migrant reception camp. There, Rūkštelė also held his first solo exhibition of watercolours in Australia most of which had been painted in Germany. On completion of his two-year work contract as a timber-worker in South Australia, the family settled in Adelaide where they became active members of the Lithuanian community. From 1950 to 1952 Rūkštelė was president of the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council; in 1952 he founded the Adelaide branch of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation and was its president from 1952 to 1955. His wife sang periodically on ABC radio in Adelaide and Rūkštelė produced a number of stage sets for the Lithuanian Theatre.

Rūkštelė is an academic artist noted for his oil and watercolour landscapes. His idealised subject matter has always been very well received by the general public. His portrayals of lyrical Lithuanian landscapes, idyllic farmhouses and fields in classical composition and local colours have special meaning for Lithuanians in exile.

In many of his paintings he uses his ethnographic knowledge in providing authentic details of place, architectural style and ethnic costume, e.g. *Sunday in Lithuania*, 1954 (ill. 353). Its faithful reproduction of the traditional roofed pole, the pattern of the national dress and even the ethnic facial features makes this a particularly appealing painting for Lithuanians. Another theme that recurs in Rūkštelė's work is the drama and tragedy of fleeing, and his choice of this subject is unique among Lithuanian artists in Australia. In *The Refugees*, 1950 (ill. 354), he depicts a scene of anguish and despair. Here he demonstrates his academic training, his knowledge of human anatomy and his classical use of colour tonality. His skill in tonality is even more apparent in his landscapes, e.g. *Pine Grove*, 1952 (ill. 355). As well as being realistic representations, Rūkštelė's paintings are imbued with lyricism and nostalgia, properties which ensure that his work has a ready market among conservative art lovers.

While in Australia, he participated regularly in exhibitions of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts of which he was a member, and in Lithuanian art exhibitions. As well, he held a number of solo showings: in 1950, 1952 and 1953 in Adelaide; at the Curzon Gallery in Sydney in 1950; and in Melbourne in 1955, his last year in Australia, in Melbourne.⁵⁵⁸ Rūkštelė now lives in retirement in the USA.

Sculptor, lecturer in sculpture and scenographer Aleksandras Marčiulionis⁵⁵⁹ was also very active in Adelaide, especially in the artistic field, and was the chief scenographer for the Lithuanian Theatre. He was born in Žagariškiai village in the county of Kaunas in 1911. After studying at Aušra High School, he enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art, graduating in 1936 with a major in sculpture. His teacher was realist sculptor Juozas Zikaras. From 1938 Marčiulionis taught art at the Kaunas Technical College.

In 1944 with his wife, ceramist Eleonora Marčiulionis, and their three children, he fled to the West and from 1946 to 1949 was a lecturer in sculpture at L'École des Arts et Métiers in Freiburg-im-Breisgau. While in Germany, he became a foundation member of the Lithuanian Institute of Art and participated in its exhibitions. In 1949 Marčiulionis and his family arrived in Australia. After fulfilling his work contract as a timber cutter he went to Adelaide where he became involved in Lithuanian cultural life, especially with the Theatre-Studio for six of whose performances he executed the stage decor. He participated in Lithuanian exhibitions locally and nationally and was a member of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts with which he exhibited sculptures and drawings.

Marčiulionis's sculptures created during his time in Adelaide are based on Lithuanian folk art but influenced by the work of Renaissance sculptors and more recent artists such as Rodin and Maillol. His work is figurative, massive and rather static, e.g. *Prayer from the Ruins*, 1953 (ill. 356). In this simplification of form, posture and proportion draw on folk-art tradition and drama is added by the tense expression of the face and the rigidity of the hands. In more relaxed moments, Marčiulionis executed a number of charming chamber pieces referring to Greek mythology, e.g. *The Fauns*, 1954 (ill. 357), where, within a framework of strong composition, bodies and limbs create an harmonious and restful atmosphere. Disappointed with the lack of artistic opportunities in Australia, especially for his ceramist wife, Marčiulionis moved with his family in 1956 to the USA where he now works.

⁵⁵⁸ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 15 Mar. 1950; 26 Feb. 1953; 6 Apr. 1955.

⁵⁵⁹ Biogical details from *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 17, p. 293; *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 147

Ceramist and former lecturer in ceramics, **Eleonora Marčiulionis**,⁵⁶⁰ nee Lukšaite was born on 12 April 1912, in Tauragnai in the county of Utena. She attended Ausra Girls High School in Kaunas and in 1931 enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art to study ceramics under Liudvikas Strolis, a Paris graduate. Soon after graduating in 1937, she was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Art Exhibition in Paris for a ceramic figure. In 1938 she was granted a government scholarship to undertake post-graduate study in Czechoslovakia. On her return to Lithuania she was appointed ceramics instructor at the Kaunas Technical College. She married fellow lecturer and sculptor Aleksandras Marčiulionis. After fleeing to Germany during World War II, she later became a lecturer in the ceramics department at L'École des Arts et Métiers at Freiburg-im-Breisgau. During this time she was commissioned by Lithuanians to create a vase for the British Royal Family. In 1949 she arrived in Australia with her husband and three children and settled in Adelaide. While caring for her young family she managed to participate in a number of group exhibitions and was an active member of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. In 1954 she received first prize in a competition for the cover design of the programme for the United Nations Art Festival held in Adelaide. She became widely known within the Australian Lithuanian community for her individual interpretation of Lithuanian mythological and real-life figures. Her statuettes, sacred or mundane, represented in national costume and glazed in vivid colours, have become collectors' items. Marčiulionis produces decorative pots, vases and platters, but her main output is figurative, decorative ceramics. It is probably appropriate to regard her as a sculptor of ceramic miniatures, as her figurines are free-standing, three-dimensional creations. Her inspiration stems from Lithuanian mythology, folk songs and folk dances. Some of her pieces are regally simple, e.g. *Eglė, Queen of Serpents*, circa 1950 (ill. 358). Here she carefully balances voids and volumes; the juxtaposition of the static element (the girl's body) with the flowing one (the body of the serpent) is a break from a traditional approach. Most of Marčiulionis's works are lively representations of genre scenes, e.g. *Dancing Couple* (ill. 359) and *The Dancers* (ill. 360), both circa 1955. The first is a double-sided, sculptured piece in which two dancers in national costume are positioned back-to-back. The gaiety is expressed in the swinging movement of the flowing garments and the dancers' hair. Colourful glazes add to the festive mood of her work.

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid*

Sculptor Balys Milaknis⁵⁶¹ was born on 1 December 1915, in the village of Mitragalis in the county of Rokiškis. In 1935, he completed secondary study at Rokiškis High School; in 1938, he graduated from Klaipėda Teachers College and taught until 1940 when he enrolled at the Vilnius Academy of Art. In 1944 he fled to the West and after the war studied at the art school set up in Hanau refugee camp. Later he continued studies at the Staatliche Akademie der bildenden Künste in Stuttgart and at L'École des Arts et Métiers at Freiburg-im-Breisgau from where he graduated with a major in sculpture after studying under Aleksandras Marčiulionis. In 1949 Milaknis arrived in Australia with his wife and their two daughters and settled in Adelaide. Six years later, also disappointed with the few opportunities available in Australia to pursue an artistic career, the family moved to the USA.

The small amount of Milaknis's work left behind shows him as an expressionist sculptor whose figurative work displays tension and agitation, e.g. *Eve*, circa 1952 (ill. 361). His work is much more radical than that of his teacher, Marčiulionis, in the distortion of form, the avoidance of detail and the treatment of surface. Milaknis was deeply affected by exile: during much of his time in Australia he was depressed and avoided community activities although his name is listed among the teachers of the Lithuanian weekend school.⁵⁶² In his seclusion he sculpted for his own satisfaction and participated only spasmodically in Lithuanian art exhibitions. As far as is known, he now lives in the USA.

The largest migration of Lithuanian artists from Australia occurred from Adelaide. The deep feelings of bitterness of some remained long after they had moved to the USA.⁵⁶³ It seems that in the fifties there was a stronger anti-migrant feeling in Adelaide than in many other parts of Australia. Younger generation artists -- Kapočiūnas, Daugalis, Dumčius -- all tell that going to school was 'going to war.' However, in time they learned English and became friends with Australians. The older artists of the Vanguard group were in their forties or fifties when they came to Australia and did not gain fluency in English. They had accomplished artistic success, were accorded high status within their own community and no doubt expected similar recognition by Australian society. They failed to realise that other cultures have different values and priorities and that their past did not have high validity in their new situation.

⁵⁶¹ Biog/ed details from *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, Vol. 18, p. 453 and from artists Juozas Baukus, Leonas Urbonas and others.

⁵⁶² *Metraštinis*, Vol. 1, p. 71-2

⁵⁶³ When, in 1988, the author interviewed in Chicago the painter Eglė Rūkštelė-Sundstrom, daughter of painter Antanas Rūkštelė, her first words were: 'We migrated from Australia because of racial discrimination'. In the same year sculptor Aleksandras Marčiulionis was so bitter about his time in Australia that he refused to grant an interview to the author because she lived in Australia.

Disillusionment grew with what they saw as Adelaide's indifference to art and its reticence to accept migrants. In 1955, Rūkštelė and Milaknis and their families migrated to the USA. In the next year Aleksandras and Eleonora Marčiulionis followed with their family.

The European artistic training and experience of the Lithuanian artists in Adelaide so far discussed gave them confidence in their ability and in the early years they were regarded by the local Lithuanian community as the only reputable artists. This was a cause at that time of tension within the community and also the reason that artists with lesser training were accorded little or no recognition.

Vanguard Artists with Lesser Training

It was not until after 1956, when Rūkštelė, Milaknis and the Marčiulionises had left Australia, that artists of the second subgroup of the Vanguards came to the fore. Leonas Žygas and Stasys Neliubšys were probably the most active of these. In 1955 Neliubšys became president of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation and in the same year organized three group art exhibitions and several concerts. He was also the leading scenographer for the Theatre Studio, was instrumental in raising money for the Lithuanian Library and was very active in general community cultural matters. In 1956, Žygas took over as president of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation and during that year arranged two exhibitions of his paintings.

Despite their increased activity, these artists were not accorded by the Lithuanian community the same respect enjoyed by the earlier Vanguard artists. Perhaps this relates to their lesser art training or, in the case of Neliubšys, his use of a gloomy palette associated with the obsolete Russian tradition.

Community recognition for Žygas came slowly, and not until he had received favourable reviews from the Australian press. He was the only first-generation Lithuanian painter in Adelaide to adopt the contemporary abstract style of the sixties, probably because at that time he associated closely with a number of artists of other ethnic backgrounds who were the main proponents in Adelaide of abstract art. Žygas's position as an executive member of the Royal South Australian Society of Art gave him contact with artists such as Polish-born Stanislaw Ostoja-Kotkowski, a pioneer in Australia of Kinetic and Op Art, who at that time worked with computer and laser. Others with whom Žygas associated were Yugoslav artist Stanislaus Rapotec whose powerful abstracts gained him Australia-wide recognition, and the Polish brothers Ludwig and Wladislaw Dutkiewicz who were vigorously promoting abstract expressionism.

It is possible that Žygas's background as a ballet dancer facilitated his acceptance of new art forms, but there is no doubt that his fraternisation with *avant-garde* artists was a major factor in his easy acceptance of modern trends.

Leonas Žygas (1924-1980)⁵⁶⁴ was a painter, dancer and choreographer. He was born on 19 February 1924 in Biržai into a family of five children. His father was a tailor who was concerned that all his children should have a higher education. Leonas was sent to Kaunas where he studied at Aušra High School until 1944, at the same time attending private lessons with realist painter Jonas Mackevičius (1872-1954) and ballet classes at the State Theatre. In 1944 Žygas fled to Germany. In 1947 he danced at Augsburg refugee camp in the first exile Lithuanian ballet performance of *Coppelia*. In Würzburg camp he was stage designer for the folkloric ensemble, Sietynas and an art teacher at the art school organized in the camp. In 1948 he migrated to Australia and at Bathurst (NSW) migrant camp married former prima ballerina with the Kaunas Ballet Theatre, Jadvyga Buizytė. They settled in Adelaide where he worked for the rest of his life as a shop assistant.

Žygas was a rather eclectic painter; his early themes were landscape and still life, rendered in objective, cubistic style: in later abstract paintings he was able to inject emotion and poise. He was regarded by many as a brilliant colourist, and also possessed a strong sense of composition with a predominant rhythmic quality, e.g. *Regensburg*, 1947 (ill. 369). Although this is a cubistic rendering, there is a prevailing lyrical quality. In his *Kent Town, S.A.*, 1954 (ill. 370), Žygas develops dramatic atmosphere in expressionistic style. The same applies to many of his spontaneous still-life works, e.g. *Flowers*, 1957 (ill. 371). In contrast to his use of thick impasto in *Flowers*, the still-life *Vase in the Landscape*, 1968 (ill. 372), and the portrait *My Wife*, 1950 (ill. 373), are rendered in flat colour with theatrical poise. After his first solo exhibition at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts Gallery, he received very favourable reviews. Elizabeth Young wrote: 'Žygas emerges as an artist to watch, a natural, promising and provocative talent.'⁵⁶⁵

From 1970, Žygas experimented in pure abstraction and produced works in hard-edge, Op Art and his own variation of the Dada style. *Untitled*, 1975 (ill. 374), is one of his hard-edge paintings. By elimination of personal feeling in this cool, geometric work, he emphasises the painting as an object in itself and not as an expression of his subjective experience. He also experimented with colour painting and shaped canvas. In a review of the 1976 Royal South Australian Society of Arts exhibition, art reviewer Ivor Francis

⁵⁶⁴ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist's widow Jan. 1981 and Jan. 1989.

⁵⁶⁵ *Advertiser*, 18 June 1957.

described Žygas as an *avant-garde* artist. He wrote: 'Žygas is at his best when he exercises restraint and is simplistic in statement, as in *One Shadow* and *A Faint Shape*. He is less successful when he mixes and diffuses his elements as in *Green Square*, *Dark Square* and *Red Square*.'⁵⁶⁶

Žygas was active in the cultural life of both societies, Australian and Lithuanian. As mentioned he was elected president of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation and was later made a life member. He also belonged to the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and the Contemporary Society of Art. In 1968 he was elected a fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. Later, he was one of eight artists selected by the South Australian Art Gallery to represent South Australia in the Flotta Lauro Art Award. Žygas was also art journalist for the Lithuanian press and a set producer for the Lithuanian Theatre. He held nine solo exhibitions and regularly participated in the Royal South Australian Society of Arts, Contemporary Society of Art and Lithuanian art exhibitions. Leonas Žygas died from cancer on 8 August, 1980. Most of his paintings are in various personal collections and are difficult to trace. Those traced do not do justice to his achievements.

Painter and scenographer Stasys Neliubšys (1898-1979)⁵⁶⁷ was born in St. Petersburg where he completed high school and studied religious art at the local art school. After World War I the family returned to Lithuania and Neliubšys continued art studies in Kaunas. Later, he specialised in the restoration of religious paintings in churches. In the thirties he made a study tour to Paris. During the German occupation of Lithuania Neliubšys was imprisoned and was saved from death only by the cessation of hostilities. After the war he taught art at the Lithuanian art school set up in Wiesbaden refugee camp in Germany. He migrated to Australia in 1949 and settled in Adelaide.

From his art training at St. Petersburg he acquired the use of a sombre palette, rich in dark reds, greens and browns and creating a mood of mystery and drama. Even his snow-covered landscapes have an unusual, gloomy atmosphere, e.g. *Winter*, circa 1950 (ill. 375). Although he had also studied in Kaunas and Paris, new art trends had very little effect on his work. Only in Australia did he modify his realistic landscapes by using a lighter palette and by giving his brushstrokes a more personal, individual character, as in *Landscape*, circa 1960 (ill. 376). His portraits are faithful to each person's likeness and convey character, e.g. *Čiurlionis*, circa 1970 (ill. 377). Neliubšys held solo exhibitions for the Adelaide Lithuanian community in 1955, 1956 and 1959

⁵⁶⁶ *ibid.* 16 June 1976.

⁵⁶⁷ Biographical details given by the artists's step-daughter I. Norvydas (Geelong) and Bronius Straukas (Adelaide), Jan. 1989.

and, for the wider public, in Australia Hall in Adelaide in 1960 and in the Mintore Gallery in 1967. Art reviewer Elizabeth Young commented: 'Stasys Neliubšys ... is traditional in approach with vigorous control of his medium ... These unpretentious canvases are painterly studies, not fashionable today, but well handled in their kind.'⁵⁶⁸

Neliubšys has been a regular contributor to Lithuanian and Royal South Australian Society of Art exhibitions. Between 1956 and 1972 he produced stage decorations for ten productions by the Lithuanian Theatre in Adelaide.⁵⁶⁹ His art, especially his nostalgic winter scenes, is appreciated by older Lithuanians, but largely ignored by the younger generation.

Painter, sculptor and stained-glass artist Jonas Rudzinskas⁵⁷⁰ painted while working at various country places in South Australia; this gave him very few opportunities to interact with the Lithuanian community in Adelaide. Rudzinskas was born the youngest of eight children, into a farming family in Jurbudžiai village in the county of Šakiai on 6 August 1914. All members of the family played musical instruments, sang in various choirs and had an informal 'family choir'. From an early age Jonas showed talent for drawing and painting and at the age of eight, he recalls, had his first art exhibition at his school. He completed high school study in Kaunas and later enrolled concurrently at the Vilnius Academy of Fine Art and at the Conservatorium of Music where he studied the oboe. In 1944 he fled to the West, eventually staying in Stuttgart refugee camp. He joined the Lithuanian camp choir and folk-dance group, and from 1945 studied painting at the Akademie für angewandte Kunst in Stuttgart. In 1949 he migrated to Australia and began his work contract as a cleaner with the South Australian Transport Department. Later he worked as a fireman and also spent over ten years working as a builder in various country places in South Australia. In 1952 he became a member of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and gained first prize for figure painting at its exhibition that year. (ill. 378) In 1953 he enrolled at the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts. He married painter Mary Milton in 1970 and they made study tours to Malaysia, Indonesia and China in 1971-72, 1986 and 1987 respectively. Until he suffered a stroke in 1988 Rudzinskas was a prolific painter and an exhibiting member of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts, the Royal Queensland Art Society and the Brisbane Valley Art and Craft Society as well as a participant in Lithuanian art exhibitions. With his wife and her brother artist

⁵⁶⁸ Elizabeth Young, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 26 July 1967.

⁵⁶⁹ Neverauskas in *Metraštis*, Vol. 2, pp. 158-161

⁵⁷⁰ Bioged details recorded in interview with the artist's friends in Jan. 1989 and from letter dated 25 Oct. 1989 from artist.

Roy Milton he also held several travelling exhibitions. 'Art is life itself', he says.

A representational artist, Rudzinskas worked in oil, pastel and mixed media. His palette is bright and colour is applied with smooth, flat brushstrokes. Some of his landscapes are realistic while others show a tendency towards stylisation, e.g. *Coorong*, 1977 (ill. 379), in which he reproduces the sunny atmosphere of the Australian bush. Many of his flower studies are close-up views, e.g. *Lotus*, 1987 (ill. 380), and exhibit tonal aspects of painting with greater freedom in brush handling. In contrast to this freer technique, his real-life paintings reveal faithfully detailed rendering of objects, as in the documentation of species characteristics, e.g. *Seagulls*, 1986 (ill. 381).

Sculptor **Balys Grėbliūnas** (1907-1963)⁵⁷¹ became an introvert, living in constant fear and suffering a severe persecution complex. Over the years his artistic output diminished. He was born on 14 March 1907 at St. Petersburg in Russia. During World War I his mother and his seven brothers and sisters were killed. He returned to Lithuania with his father in 1917 and, a few years later, his father died. Although still a child, Grėbliūnas had to work and found employment as a builder's labourer in Kaunas. He studied at night at high school until 1929. In that year he enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art to study sculpture under Juozas Zikaras and at the Conservatorium of Music to study singing. During this time he won a competition for the design of a public fountain which was erected on the Kaukas Steps in Kaunas. He also attended a drama course conducted by Professor Balys Sruoga at the University of Vytautas the Great. In 1940 he moved to Vilnius where he joined the Čiurlionis folkloric ensemble. During the German occupation he was involved in underground activities and in 1941 and 1942 he was imprisoned by the Germans. The torture he underwent left him lame for the rest of his life. With the return to Lithuania of the Soviets in 1944, Grėbliūnas joined the massive exodus to the West, eventually arriving in Vienna. There he met again many ensemble members. In 1945 he married Marija Baronaite, a choreographer and pioneer of modern Lithuanian folk dance.

In 1947 he enrolled to study sculpture at L'École des Arts et Métiers, graduating in 1949. In the same year he migrated with his wife to Australia. He carried out a work contract as an automobile spray painter, later settling in Adelaide and working as a process worker until his death in 1963.

Grėbliūnas's figurative sculptures used dramatic themes relating to treason, torture, vengeance and grief. His first works, academic in perception,

⁵⁷¹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist's widow 10 Jan. 1989.

were heavily influenced by the style of Rodin, e.g. *The Lonely One*, circa 1955 (ill. 382). The figure is realistic in detail and, unlike later works, has an intact body and an impressionistic surface finish. In the early sixties Grėbliūnas expressed his ideas in a more extreme way, fracturing the body into separate parts and re-assembling these in surrealist style, e.g. *St. John's Head*, circa 1960 (ill. 383). The compositional experiment of exploring relationships between voids and volumes is prominent in his bas-relief works e.g. *Enigma*, 1961 (ill. 384). In 1956 Grėbliūnas held his only solo exhibition at Adelaide Lithuanian House and participated, although infrequently, at exhibitions of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and the Lithuanian community. His widow has described him as a tragic figure, tormented by injustices dealt to him by fate, and seeking solace and compensation in art.

Vanguard Art Photographers

From the early fifties, photographic records of Lithuanian cultural activities in Adelaide were compiled by Vytautas Vosylius, Alfonsas Budrys and Borisas Borjeras. As well as providing visual information to the local and overseas Lithuanian press they produced art photography, organized photographic exhibitions and participated in Australian photographic competitions. Borjeras was also a well known cartoonist. None of these art photographers was affected by the artistic tensions in the community.

Art photographer **Vytautas Vosylius** (1912-1990)⁵⁷² was born, the youngest of seven children, on 16 November 1912 in the village of Čypėnai in the county of Biržai. During World War I his parents were tortured to death by the Germans and the children were raised by the village elders (seniūnai). After leaving Panevėžys High School in 1930, Vosylius enlisted in the meteorological division of the Lithuanian Air Force. There he was involved in photography and electrical engineering. He married in 1933 and his daughter Živilė was born eight years later. In 1941 Vosylius took part in the Lithuanian uprising and in 1943 was captured by the Germans and transported to work in Finland and Norway. After World War II he had the choice of repatriation to his homeland or remaining in exile. In spite of his family still being in Lithuania he chose not to return immediately because he believed that in a short time he would be able to return to a free Lithuania.⁵⁷³ He went to Germany and gained refuge in the

⁵⁷² Biog/ed details given during interview with the artist Jan. 1989 and in letter dated 20 May 1989 from artist to author.

⁵⁷³ No details are available concerning his family in Lithuania.

displaced persons camp at Bamberg where he joined the Lithuanian Folkloric Ensemble, led by conductor Stepas Sodeika. Between 1945 and 1948 he attended photography classes organized by Antanas Bačiulis at the Aralsen Technical College near Kassel.

In 1949 Vosylius migrated to Australia and for the first five years was a fireman in the South Australian Railways Department. He then worked as an electrician in Adelaide until his retirement in 1977. He was twice widowed and twice remarried. He was active in the Lithuanian community: in 1954 he founded the Lithuanian Photographers Group in Adelaide; in 1958 he was an executive member of the committee of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation, he was several times an executive member of the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council, the permanent lighting operator for theatrical performances, an occasional actor and long-time singer in the Lithuania choir. Vosylius was also a member from 1964 of the Adelaide Camera Club and gained numerous prizes in club competitions. In the 1967 South Australian Photographic Competition he was awarded the John Mack Oscar trophy for the best print at the exhibition. He participated also in national photographic exhibitions in various Australian cities and gained three first prizes and four merit awards; in the International Photography Exhibition in Adelaide in the seventies he won second prize; and in the Lithuanian Photographers in Exile exhibition in 1978 he was awarded second prize for his portrait, *Algirdas Kudirka*, 1978 (ill. 362). Using colour slides he produced several documentary features, each of about thirty minutes' duration. These included *Fate of the Refugee*, 1965;⁵⁷⁴ *The Fifth Lithuanian Scouts Jamboree*, 1967;⁵⁷⁵ and *Lithuanian Days in Adelaide 1968*.⁵⁷⁶

His work shows a painterly quality achieved by the manipulation of subtle tonal gradations. At the same time it has a sense of drama due to skilful manipulation of light. His use of rich blacks is strongly defined and skilfully enhanced by the contrast with highlighted areas. His main subjects are Nature and human personality. In his prize-winning photograph, *Sunrise over the Pacific*, 1949 (ill. 363), he captures Nature in awesome dimensions, glorifying the sun as the central object and contrasting its radiance with black clouds. This sense of composition, the contrast of black and white and the subtle tonality of ocean and sky are features of his works which have earned him many awards.

In portraiture, e.g. *Algirdas Kudirka*, 1978, he seeks to explore the inner personality of his fellow artist. The side lighting intensifies the lines furrowing the subject's face and seems to expose him as a book open to be read. Vosylius's collection of portraits contains only age-worn, anxious faces, making it apparent that his interest was not in outward beauty. Vosylius spent

⁵⁷⁴ Tremtinio kelias

⁵⁷⁵ Penktoji tautinė skautų stovykla

⁵⁷⁶ Lietuvių Dienos Adelaidėje, 1968

much time documenting Lithuanian cultural events and provided the local and overseas Lithuanian press with photographs. Most of all, though, he liked the world of Nature: 'Every beautiful sunset touches my heart,' he wrote.

Self-taught photographer **Aifonsas Budrys**⁵⁷⁷ has also played an important role in Lithuanian cultural life and is a regular contributor to Lithuanian newspapers, bulletins and chronicles in Australia, the USA and Canada.

The eldest of three sons of Petras and Morta Budrys, he was born in 1915 in Karoliškis village in the county of Kupiškis. His education was cut short when, at the end of primary school, it was necessary for him to work on the family farm because of his father's failing health. At sixteen he joined the local railway brass band and began to keep a photographic record of its musical tours. In the late thirties he met photographer Jonas Žitkus who gave him much helpful advice. In 1942 Budrys married Birutė Navickaitė and in 1944 they fled to the West. After the war they were accommodated at a displaced persons camp near Nürenberg. In 1949 they migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. Budrys completed his work contract at an iron foundry and then worked at the General Motors Holden factory as a die-caster until his retirement in 1980. Since its establishment in 1954 he has been a member of the Lithuanian Photographic Group and from 1963 to 1969 was a member of the Adelaide Camera Club. He has participated in Lithuanian Photographic Art exhibitions held during Lithuanian Days and has gained prizes in various sections. His *Ready for a Catch*, 1965 (ill. 364), was awarded a silver medal by the South Australian Photographic Federation. This photograph shows his technical competence with unusual subject matter and a strong sense of composition. In 1964 the Australian photography magazine *Photo Directory* presented a medallion to him for *Pomeranian Dog*, and in 1968 he received an International Trophy for his work, *Approaching Storm* (ill. 365).

Caricaturist and art photographer **Borisas Borjeras**⁵⁷⁸ was born in Kaunas on 14 December 1910. After completing secondary education he enrolled at the Kaunas School of Art and graduated in 1931, having studied painting under Ušinskas and applied graphics with Dobužinskas. During his student years he contributed cartoons and caricatures to newspapers and magazines. With the Russian and German occupations of Lithuania, Borjeras ceased producing cartoons and turned to photography. In 1940 he married lawyer Elena Charažauskaitė and four years later they fled to Germany. Here Borjeras

⁵⁷⁷ Biog/cd details recorded in interview with the artist 12 Jan. 1989.

⁵⁷⁸ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 14 Jan. 1989.

resumed political satirical drawing to the delight of political refugees. However, after receiving several anonymous warnings thought to emanate from the Soviets, he refrained from political satire.

In 1949 Borjeras and his wife migrated to Australia. After fulfilling his work contract with the South Australia Railways Department, he worked as a commercial artist. Australian Lithuanians particularly enjoy his humorous cartoons and his caricatures of public figures, often conveying political comment. Rendered spontaneously with swift, minimal lines, his work is free of detail, e.g. *Yalta Conference*, 1945 (ill. 366). This event has painful meaning for Baltic refugees, as also does the *de jure* recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, a moment recorded in Borjeras's cartoon, *The Baltic States*, 1972 (ill. 367). Although in his caricature, *The Editor*, 1948 (ill. 368), Borjeras is alluding to Jonas Kardelis, long-time editor of *Lietuvos Žinios* (News of Lithuania), published in Lithuania and *Lietuvių Žodis* (Lithuanian Word), published in Germany, the portrayal has a universal quality. In Australia Borjeras's output has gradually diminished and is limited now almost entirely to the 'safe' depiction of personal friends.

The Vanguard artists in Adelaide were in many ways different from those in other parts of Australia. In 1966 Leonas Žygas was prompted to appraise the Adelaide Lithuanian artistic situation thus: 'Lithuanian artists in Adelaide came from various schools or were without formal training at all, and do not maintain any relationship with each other: all are great and independent individualists and do not influence each other. There are no generals, but no one wants to be a private.'⁵⁷⁹

DELAYED ARTISTS

Sculptor and teacher Ieva Pocius, b.1923, and painter Algirdas Kudirka (1915-1980) comprise this group. Although Pocius began to draw and paint in childhood, her artistic activities were postponed because of war and, later, by family commitments. Kudirka does not fit the category so well. Although it is true that, while working in Queensland for several years after arriving in Australia, he did execute a number of artistic works, it was not until after his move to Adelaide in 1955 that he began to expand his repertoire and to become known to the Lithuanian community. For this reason, he is included as an artist of the Delayed group.

⁵⁷⁹ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 19 Sept. 1966

Pocius³⁶⁰ was born Ieva Sakalauskaitė on 14 September 1923, on the Pyniava estate in the county of Panevėžys. Her mother Eugenija was a lover of art and music and played the piano. Her father Aleksandras, a forester, drew and painted as a hobby. Her uncle was an amateur sculptor and Ieva was impressed by his figurative pieces. The family moved to Kaunas where Pocius studied at the Girls High School until 1941, after which she enrolled to study architecture at the University of Vytautas the Great. After the Germans closed the university in 1943, she married an engineering student, Martynas Pocius, and in 1944 they fled to Germany.

In 1951 they migrated to Australia with their two children. While Ieva Pocius worked part-time, her husband was employed by the South Australian Railways Department and continued engineering studies at the University of Adelaide. Meanwhile, Eleonora Marčiulionis's ceramic sculptures and other works stimulated Pocius's interest in clay and she joined the Potters Club. After her husband's graduation as a civil engineer in 1956, Pocius attended sculpture classes held in conjunction with the South Australian School of Art. In 1959 she enrolled as a full-time sculpture student at the School of Art. In 1961, while still a student, she was commissioned to execute the fourteen-piece *Stations of the Cross* for the Hectorville Roman Catholic Church in Adelaide.

In 1962, after having been the first and only student in the newly established sculpture class, she graduated from the South Australian School of Art. She received strong encouragement from her teacher, sculptor Paul Beadle, and was able to complete the four-year course in three. Although Pocius's work has undergone significant changes in form, the principal themes – the life cycle, the continuation of vital forces -- have remained. She says, 'Every work, even abstract work, has an idea.' Her *oeuvre* divides into three overlapping periods.

The *First Period* comprises works from 1962 to approximately 1972. There is a preponderance of figurative sculpture in her early work. The heavy volumes are devoid of detail and evoke thoughts of primitive, pent-up energies, e.g. *Adam Arising*, 1962 (ill. 385) and *Rising Forms*, 1963 (ill. 386), both executed in cement. There is formal reference to Andre Derain and Constantin Brancusi, but her aim is not to present a statement of indisputable being but, rather, an expression of awakening and becoming. Her abstract art of this period often tends to be personal and lyrical, e.g. *Memory of Lithuania*, 1964 (ill. 387), for which she was awarded first prize by the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. The piece is executed in jarrah wood along cubist-constructivist lines and, in feeling, reflects traditional Lithuanian carving with its introspective character. However, her metal sculptures are more extrovert, vigorous and exploratory.

³⁶⁰ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 14 Jan. 1989.

After Pocius's first Melbourne public exhibition, Bernard Smith commented: 'The open-work sculpture needs simplification, is still at times a little fussy in structure and articulation.'⁵⁸¹ Her subsequent open structures, consisting of flat metal plates or bands, straight or convoluted, are in fact, simplified. The resulting rhythmical articulation of voids and volumes evokes a strong sense of dynamic life forces in a simpler form, e.g. *Carousel*, 1968 (ill. 388). After her 1969 exhibition in Adelaide, art critic Lou Klepac wrote: 'Pocius is showing some of the best sculptures we have seen in Adelaide ... Her work has strength, wit and sensitivity.'⁵⁸²

The *Second Period* comprises abstract metal works in welded mild steel and aluminium. The forms are further simplified and all sculptures are open structures, with slim, welded planes conveying movement and vitality, e.g. *Abstract*, 1975 (ill. 389) and *Flow*, 1980 (ill. 390). This is a joyous period, marked by the interplay of interlocking concave-convex surfaces contrasted by rhythmical voids. There is a reference to the work of Archipenko in the use of voids as a compositional element.

The playfulness and intricacy of urban life is nowhere better expressed by Pocius than in the welded brass piece, *City Life*, 1980 (ill. 391). Its creator noted: 'Continuity of nature or events with ever so subtle changes between A and B but with A and Z being almost strangers -- that was the idea of this sculpture. The city as a whole and its people.'⁵⁸³

The same notion of continuity of life is found in Pocius's most terse sculptural statement, *No Beginning and No End*, 1983 (ill. 392). In this minimalist metal work the single element, twisting and rotating into itself, symbolises the metaphysical concept of life's continuity and the smooth transition from one state to another.

The *Third Period*, from about the middle eighties, is characterised by a return to figurative sculpture. Pocius comments on various aspects of life and death, e.g. *Man the Target*, 1984 (ill. 393). The stylised and simplified torso with chest perforated by a void hints at dark, destructive forces. However, in the same period she produced a cycle of six cheerful pieces entitled, *Women not as a Sex Object*, 1985 (ill. 394). The sculptor says, 'The women I portrayed are strong, staunch and independent, requiring nobody's support.' Both styles of her Third Period allow us to assume that her intention is to make strong statements on current issues: human rights, women's rights and humanity in general. In 1987 Pocius won the competition conducted by the Federal

⁵⁸¹ *Age*, Melbourne, 1 Sept. 1965.

⁵⁸² *News*, Adelaide, 2 July 1969.

⁵⁸³ From catalogue Mildura Arts Centre, 1982.

Lithuanian Community Council for a sculpture designed as a bicentennial gift to Australia from the Lithuanian community. The work, *Eglė, the Queen of Serpents*, is a bronze sculpture three metres in height and based on a mythological theme. It was erected in Glebe Park in Canberra in 1988. Since 1962 Pocius has been a member of the Contemporary Art Society of South Australia and was an executive member of the society from 1964 to 1967. She is a Fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. From 1964 to 1975 she was a part-time teacher of sculpture at the South Australian School of Art.

In 1963, 1965 and 1967 she was awarded the sculpture prize by the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. In 1966 she gained the prize for sculpture at the Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Sydney; in 1967 she was a prize-winner at Bundaberg in Queensland. She was awarded the Prize of Honour at the International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria, for her bronze sculpture. Many of her works appear in public places in both Adelaide and Canberra. Pocius is an active community member and a regular contributor to art exhibitions. In 1968, 1980 and 1988 she was the Adelaide organizer and curator of the biennial Lithuanian Days art exhibitions.

Algirdas Kudirka (1915-1980)³⁸⁴ was a painter, stage decorator and graphic and poster-work artist. Very few details about his early life are available. It is known that he was born in 1915 in St. Petersburg and that he and his parents returned to Lithuania after World War I. Algirdas studied art at the Vilnius Academy of Art for three years. In 1944 he was captured by the Nazis, conscripted into the German army and taken prisoner of war by the American army.

In 1948 Kudirka migrated to Australia where he fulfilled his work contract as a sugar-cane cutter in Queensland. During that time he painted in oil a large picture, *Holy Mary*, a copy of a revered painting in Vilnius.³⁸⁵ He donated his work to the parish of Freshwater in 1948 to mark the first Lithuanian Day celebrations in Australia. In 1949 he exhibited four graphic art works at a Gympie exhibition and gained first prize. The judge, Mr. S. Patrick, commented: 'The exhibits of Lithuanian artist Mr. Algirdas Kudirka were of a particularly high order. A skilled and versatile craftsman, Mr. Kudirka revealed a masterly touch in his four pen-and-ink drawings. A rare depth of feeling was evident in all his work.'³⁸⁶ While still in Queensland, Kudirka painted murals in private homes, decorated church halls and painted pictures of religious subjects for Catholic churches, mostly without remuneration.

³⁸⁴ Biogled details gained from the artist's former acquaintances.

³⁸⁵ Aušros Varnų Marija.

³⁸⁶ *Gympie Times*, 28 May 1949.

In 1955 he moved to Adelaide and became involved in the artistic activities of the Lithuanian community, painting theatrical sets and decorating Lithuanian House with wooden ornaments, based on folk-art symbols. He began to use poker-work as part of his artistic repertoire. In 1956 Kudirka held his first solo exhibition at St. Joseph's Hall in Adelaide. He showed twenty-two poker-work items and ten oil paintings. In 1957 he won a bronze medallion at the Royal Adelaide Exhibition and in 1958 he was one of six Lithuanian artists who held an exhibition at Lithuania House in Adelaide. During the 1962 Lithuanian Days festival he held a joint poker-work exhibition with Rimas Daugalis at the Forestville Sports Complex.

Kudirka remained faithful to the academic training he had received in Vilnius. His realistic style shows considerable skill, with tight composition and subject matter generally idealised, contrived scenes, e.g. *Liberty*, 1968 (ill. 395). His paintings use a restricted colour scale, mainly in a minor key.

He remained unmarried and in later years was afflicted by alcoholism. He spent the last five years of his life at the Lithuanian Catholic Centre in Adelaide where, in return for accommodation, he decorated the weekend school classrooms with sketches of Lithuanian historical figures. Although his work increased in quantity at this time, there was a decrease in quality. He died in Adelaide in 1980. He is remembered by Lithuanians as a gregarious and friendly person who had considerable influence on younger artists, especially Aurimas Dumčius and Rimas Daugalis, through teaching them new graphic techniques.

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS: YOUNG ARRIVALS

In the early sixties, a number of young artists, born outside Australia but educated here, began to appear on the local art scene: Rimas Daugalis, b. 1939; Aurimas Dumčius b. 1940; Vytas Kapočius, b. 1943; Vytas Šerelis, b. 1946 and Žilba Vilmanis, b. 1945. They all vividly recall difficulties they encountered as migrant children beginning school with little or no English. Some remember the terror of fleeing Lithuania; and all recall at least something of the hardships of life in refugee camps in post-war Europe. To varying degrees these traumatic experiences have affected their psyche and their art. Their early life in Australia was spent in migrant reception camps, for the most part without their fathers who were assigned to work in other localities. Their memories of their early school years are of the hostility shown by many Australian children and of being called derogatory names such as 'bloody Balts.' By the late fifties there was much greater acceptance of migrants and the young Lithuanians had

established firm friendships with Australians some of whom joined with them in sport, at Lithuanian Days festivals, and so on.

The first of the second-generation artists to display his work to the Lithuanian community was Rimas Daugalis who, in 1962, held a joint poker-work exhibition with Algirdas Kudirka. In the following year, Vytautas Kapociūnas, at that time still a student at the South Australian School of Art, held his first solo exhibition at Adelaide Lithuanian House, principally to gauge public reaction to his work. In 1964, having received strong encouragement from Lithuanians, he entered the Goya Art Award for artists under twenty-five, and won first prize for his oil painting, *Boys Fishing*. In 1965 Vytautas Šerelis, a final year art student, followed tradition and arranged his first solo exhibition at Lithuanian House.

Rimas Daugalis⁵⁸⁷ has gone on to become an artist, art teacher and art judge. He was born on 4 October 1939, in Rumsiskes, Lithuania, to forester Anas and teacher Marija Daugalis. In 1944 his parents and their three children fled to Germany where their longest stay was in Diepholz refugee camp. In 1949 they arrived in Australia and went to Adelaide. Daugalis graduated in 1959 from Marist Brothers Agricultural College where, he says, he was accepted by his peers only after he became a sports champion. From 1960 he taught art at a number of high schools while continuing to study part-time for a Fine Arts degree and Diploma of Education which he was awarded in 1972. During this time he executed stage decorations for the Lithuanian Theatre.

Since 1966 Daugalis has been a member of the Contemporary Art Society of South Australia and a judge of art for the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural societies of South Australia. It is interesting to note that Daugalis had no art lessons at school. He states that his interest in art stems from his home and from Lithuanian art exhibitions. He says, 'Art for me is an expression of my heritage. It is like expressing a dream.' He brings out his artistic ideas using the rather unusual technique of poker-work, or wood-burning. Algirdas Kudirka was influential in Daugalis's choice of pokerwork as his medium and was his first teacher in the technique.

Through pokerwork, Daugalis re-creates his childhood. His memories are of fear and fleeing and a child's perspective is used to portray bleak, autumn landscapes. He uses open composition in which there are only a few landmarks, such as a cross, a church or a wooded grove on the far horizon. The main focus of his work draws on memories of the turbulent, threatening earth with its rolling furrows and windrows, seen fleetingly and without detail, e.g.

⁵⁸⁷ Biographical details recorded during interview with the artist 10 Jan. 1989.

Memories I, 1967 (ill. 396). The sun and clouds are always present in his landscapes, but it is not the traditional, benevolent sun: rather, its power is diminished by clouds, e.g. *Memories II*, 1982 (ill. 397). Daugalis executes his wood-burnings as a graphic artist his engravings – with burrs and chisels, in fine lines and dots. They are rendered tightly and rhythmically and are enhanced by tonal accents.

Daugalis is an active member of the Lithuanian community and participates regularly in its artistic activities.

Aurimas Dumčius⁵⁸⁸ is a teacher and artist who works as sculptor, ceramist and painter. The elder of two sons, he was born in Kaunas in 1940. In 1944 his parents Vladas and Antanina Dumčius fled with their children to Germany and were eventually housed at the Seedorf refugee camp. There Aurimas attended Lithuanian primary school. In 1949 his family migrated to Australia and went to live in Adelaide. Aurimas continued his education at the local primary school, and from 1952 to 1957 attended Norwood High School. For some time after leaving school he worked at various jobs, the most memorable, he says, being oil prospecting with the United Geographic Company in the Simpson Desert. The red-white sand dunes, mirages and sunsets left indelible impressions, later re-defined in his art. In 1967 he enrolled at the South Australian School of Art to study ceramics and sculpture, graduating in 1972. In 1976 he gained a Diploma of Education. He taught art for some time at the Gilles Plains High School and is now a freelance artist and part-time teacher at various Adelaide high schools.

Dumčius works in abstract style and has a tendency to mix media and genre; he interprets in modern idiom his experiences as well as ancient legends. The artist experiments with numerous materials and enjoys blending and juxtaposing media. His early work is relatively simple, e.g. *Queblo Sunset*, 1977 (ill. 398), which recalls the Central Australian desert with its dunes and wind-forned ripples. Although this welded-steel structure has a rough black surface, the rhythmic repetition of triangular forms and embracing sunrays endows the work with lyricism. There is some reference to the landscapes of David Smith, but the work's individuality is maintained in the handling of curving planes juxtaposed by thin wires. *Girl in a Desert*, 1985 (ill. 399), is a combination of glass, wood and solder. The whole structure is mounted, the artist says, on a female breast, made of birchwood, on which is placed a large protruding sun in a red, desert landscape, breaking conventional sculptural boundaries. Both the works described have a tendency to merge two-

⁵⁸⁸ Biogled details recorded in interview with the artist 9 Jan. 1989.

dimensional and three-dimensional qualities. The same tendency is seen in *Midnight Tomb Guardians*, 1985 (ill. 400). This is an abstract, tenebrous interpretation of secret Aboriginal myths, with forms built up from marble dust and overpainted with monochromatic acrylics and oil. In some areas the raised surface is as high as the relief sculpture. A lyrical quality is created by using repetitive forms and by the restrained selection of colours and symbols. Dumčius is a member of the Contemporary Art Society and participates in its group exhibitions as well as in Lithuanian art events.

Painter, draftsman, sculptor and art teacher **Vytas Bronius Kapočiūnas**,⁵⁸⁹ the younger son of economist Bronius and linguist Marija Kapočiūnas, was born in Kaunas on 23 December 1943. In 1944 the family fled to Germany and after the war stayed in the Kempten refugee camp. At the age of five, Vytas witnessed in Germany a mass execution of White Russians who had refused to be sent back to the Soviet Union. 'They grasped the rails of the church fence while American soldiers, mainly black, shot them,' Kapočiūnas recalls. These images recurred as childhood nightmares to which he later gave artistic expression. In 1949 the Kapočiūnas family arrived in Australia and settled in Adelaide. Vytas attended St. Ignatius College and he has painful memories of his school years. In his final secondary year he transferred to Norwood High School and in the following year enrolled at the South Australian School of Art from which he gained a Diploma of Fine Arts in 1965.

In 1966, after winning a French Government scholarship, he travelled to Bordeaux and spent six months researching mediaeval art. Since his return to Australia, he has held a position as lecturer in the Painting Department of the South Australian School of Art. In 1968 Kapočiūnas married Australian artist and television presenter Winnie Peltz. Following the breakdown of the marriage, he re-married in 1982. His second wife, formerly Jane Hardy, is a painter and the mother of his son. In 1974, 1978, 1981 and 1988 Kapočiūnas travelled overseas, visiting Britain, Europe, India and South Africa. In 1978 he held a solo exhibition at the Ansdell Gallery in London and also worked at the Baticanca Cultural Centre in West Berlin where he experimented in printmaking, etching and lithography.

Kapočiūnas's early paintings and drawings were rendered rather realistically in surrealist mode. He later developed a more expressionistic manner: his line became sharper, emphasising the most characteristic features, yet still retaining, as London art critic Barbara Wright described, 'an amazing tenderness.'⁵⁹⁰ Kapočiūnas applies strong colour sparingly in order to make an

⁵⁸⁹ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 11 Jan. 1989.

⁵⁹⁰ Barbara Wright in *Arts Review*, Vol. 19, No. 17, London, 1967, p. 312

impact on mood and emotion. His compositions remain simple and uncrowded, with a few selected objects centrally placed. His use of large planes emphasises drama and tension. Since his student days he has admired Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Goya, presumably for their dramatic content and strength of expression. Kapočiūnas's work is related to them in spirit as well as to modern artists, Beckmann and Orozco, all involved in social or political comment.

Kapočiūnas approaches art from a humanitarian point of view and his social, political and religious statements are intended to appeal to the viewer's conscience. He identifies himself with the oppressed, deprived, powerless and persecuted. His paintings are visual interpretations of the anguish of life and death, both human and animal. Art critic Dora Chapman has said of his work: '[There is] none so blind as those who do not wish to see; none so deaf as those who do not wish to hear. The work of Vytautas Kapočiūnas ... is not for those who like a gentle life.'⁵⁹¹

In his *Spanish* series, 1970, his interest lies not in the glory of the victorious toreador but in the dead bull being devoured by hungry dogs. In his surrealist painting *On the Table*, 1974 (ill. 401), it is not a gourmet meal that attracts his attention but the decapitated heads of a rooster and a wild duck, depicted with still questioning looks in their dead eyes.

Kapočiūnas's compassion for the endurance of the silent sufferer and for the cry of the dying is shown in his African series, *Faces*, 1985, and his Australian series, *Carnage of Australian Fauna*, e.g. *Death Riding*, 1970 (ill. 402). Here he portrays the relentlessness of Nature in the death of the weakest, while *Political Prisoner*, 1985 (ill. 403), from his *African* series, shows that the same savage law is often imposed upon humans by the State and the Church. The artist says of this work: 'What I tried to register was how the political prisoner is treated like an animal, dehumanised and tortured. The archway symbolises the Church. The old English concept of sanctuary was, if you made it to the church, you were safe. I have related it here to the British legal system which is supposed to help protect the individual until proven guilty. But in South Africa it so often seems to work against the prisoner.'⁵⁹²

Perhaps the greatest trauma of all in the South African political struggle is experienced by refugee women and children. Kapočiūnas portrays this in his pastel drawing of mother and child, *Nobody Wins when the Prize is Hate*, 1988 (ill. 404). Kapočiūnas asserts that suffering is universal, inevitable and with its beginnings in infancy, e.g. *Crying*, 1985 (ill. 405). In *Father and Son*, 1975 (ill. 406), from his *Kronos* series, he emphasises the tension and anguish imposed by man upon man. The same notion is expressed in his *Aborigines* series where he ponders on the destinies of Aboriginal women who are

⁵⁹¹ Dora Chapman, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 12 Dec. 1973.

⁵⁹² From notes accompanying the Tasmanian Touring Exhibition, 1988.

compelled to obey tribal religious laws which deny them joy in life. Kapociūnas uses a metaphorical mode of expression for the anguish of humans and animals alike, as in *Resurrection*, 1982 (ill. 407). Here the bodies of a woman and a kangaroo merge and the picture has ironic religious connotations in its mediaeval composition and framing. In the series *Well-trained*, 1979 (ill. 408), the universality of anxiety and insecurity is expressed metaphorically through the image of a dog which represents oppressed people living under totalitarian or dictatorial regimes and anxiously fearing their master's next move.

Vytas Šerelis⁵⁹³ works as a painter, graphic artist, book illustrator, art photographer and musician. He was born on 10 February 1946, in Memmingen refugee camp in Germany. He was brought to Australia by his parents when they migrated in 1950. In 1963 Vytas matriculated from Woodville (South Australia) High School and then enrolled at the South Australian School of Art from which he graduated in 1966. At that time, abstract art, especially hard-edge and colour painting, was the prevailing art style. Šerelis preferred figurative and realistic art and he explains: 'They wanted to do it in a certain way. I wanted to do it my way. I could not stand the conflict and stopped painting.'⁵⁹⁴ He turned to music. After studying photographs of sitars, he made himself a sitar and learned to play it. In 1967 he travelled to Calcutta at the invitation of the Akbar Khan School of Music. India impressed him, he says, with its music, its linguistic affinity to Lithuanian and its life style. 'So old, so big!' he says. He next went to London where he married an Australian, Leone Furler. He joined a popular music group as a sitar player and toured North Africa with the group. On his return to London he worked also as a book and magazine illustrator and as an interior decorator.

After visiting European art exhibitions and seeing the great diversity of styles, he says he reached the conclusion that in visual art 'anything goes'. This realisation prompted his return to Adelaide in 1970 to resume painting in realist, super-realist and surrealist styles. In 1971 Šerelis was commissioned to produce a large mural for the Adelaide Festival Theatre.⁵⁹⁵ Of the work, Šerelis says, 'There is no theme, only personal artistic event, an extension of myself. Its by me, for me and of me.'⁵⁹⁶ In 1973, following a successful exhibition in Sydney, he received a grant of \$5000 from the Visual Arts Board and purchased an eighteen-acre piece of land at Carey Gully in the Adelaide Hills.

⁵⁹³ Biogled details recorded in interview with the artist 1 Jan. 1989.

⁵⁹⁴ John Mills, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 1 Feb. 1975.

⁵⁹⁵ Originally the commission was for a mural 2m high by 30m in length, but the length was later shortened to 20m.

⁵⁹⁶ *Canberra Times*, 2 Aug. 1977.

He named his property, situated at the end of a rough bush track, Piggy Lane and lives alone in a dug-out. His time is spent on artistic pursuits.

In 1974 Šerelis was awarded the Alice Springs Prize for his painting, *Father and Son*, and in 1975 received the prestigious Robin Hood Art Award for *Old Lady with a Fox Fur*. In 1976 he constructed *Giant Face*, *Spider Web* and *Flying Eyeball* for the Fun Palace at the Carclew Arts Centre during the Adelaide Festival of Arts. In 1989 he was artist-in-residence at the University of Adelaide.

Šerelis is an enigmatic person. John Mills called him 'a cross between Leonardo Da Vinci and Peter Pan'.⁵⁹⁷ In 1974, David Dridan, one of the judges of the Alice Springs Art Prize, after awarding him first prize, stated: 'Šerelis is one of the greatest young painters in Australia today'.⁵⁹⁸ Painting for him, Šerelis says, is 'a bridge between myself and other people and a way of escaping from being trapped in oneself.' He feels an urge to express himself through painting and music. 'I see me as an artist, and me as a god -- if God's got to come out, you've got to make the path easy and that's what my painting does'.⁵⁹⁹ He believes that the paintings are an extension of himself and says: 'They help me move towards the perfection that Meyer Baba achieved,⁶⁰⁰ that true godliness that we all have, don't we? ... I am a god, we all are.'

He also feels that he has a special mission to build 'a new world in the ruined old world', which he envisages around his dwelling place, Piggy Lane. His abode which consists of discarded cars, buses, pieces of corrugated iron and indefinable junk, attracts as much media attention as do his prize winning paintings. He has already built many miniature corrugated-iron structures; one of them alludes to the pyramid; another, with a bulbous upside-down pot, recalls a Byzantine church. 'I don't worry about appearances -- this may look like a hovel now but you may not believe it one day', he says, presumably envisaging the place in future times. His art prizes and grants finance his 'future centre of art and music for disadvantaged artists' in Piggy Lane, and he is helping to make a film about its building process, now in its second decade. Šerelis is interested also in science. He says that while staying in his Piggy Lane abode, he is also writing a thesis on gravity and intends to invent a man-powered flying machine, a helicopter at least, which would enable him to fly at 200 kph.⁶⁰¹ In his work, as in his life, Šerelis rebels against convention and tradition. His work varies both thematically and stylistically: although he claims to be a realist, he is described in different ways by art critics. David Dolan and Ivor Francis class his work as 'magic realism', while Daniel Thomas calls it

⁵⁹⁷ *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 1 Feb. 1975.

⁵⁹⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹⁹ *Australian*, 10 Sept. 1977.

⁶⁰⁰ A celebrated guru.

⁶⁰¹ *News*, Adelaide, 9 Sept. 1975.

‘fantastic realism and surrealism.’ Although in some of his paintings, Šerelis seems spiritually close to the American ‘magic realists’ of the thirties, a group which included Hopper, Wood and Wyeth, Šerelis says that the greatest influences on his style have been fellow-student Vytautas Kapočius and the great Lithuanian painter, Čiurlionis.

In nearly all his paintings, Šerelis maintains the same principle of composition: in each, the chosen central subject is prominently placed, and the painting is open and uncluttered, inviting the viewer to focus on the central idea. He paints in meticulous, minute detail, using local colours applied smoothly with the smallest of brushstrokes.

Šerelis's early work, executed in tempera, shows the influence of impressionism, e.g. *Untitled Portrait* (ill. 409) and *Still Life*, both 1966. Following his return from overseas, his painting gradually acquired a more defined realism, e.g. *Me*, 1972 (ill. 410). Although this self-portrait is a mirror image, it is no mere photographic work: the general stance, gesture and absence of background imply a spiritual dimension as if the artist reaches toward someone from beyond. His prize-winning paintings, *Father and Son*, 1974 (ill. 411), and *Old Lady with a Fox Fur*, 1975, are both rendered in oil with faithful detail and smooth technique, and evoke notions of life-cycle and transience. In *Father and Son* the artist contrasts the energy of life of the newly born and the emaciated body of an adult. In *Old Lady with a Fox Fur*, he emphasises mortality by paralleling the lives of the old lady and the fox. Interviewed, Šerelis said, ‘I respond to a dying world, to junk. I want to make alive the sinking world.’ It seems that he reifies these ideas in paintings such as *Broken Wheel*, 1976 (ill. 412) and *Old Chair*, 1985 (ill. 413). Another group of his paintings relates to Eastern mysticism, e.g. *Elephant and Eyeball* (ill. 414) and *Monolith*, both 1977 (ill. 415). These are symbolic, surrealist works, reminiscent of Dali's juxtaposition of objects unrelated to their surroundings. In similar vein are *Battle for the Planet*, 1984 (ill. 416) and *New Circus*, 1978 (ill. 417), the latter employing oblique references to Christian beliefs. Šerelis maintained a close relationship with the Lithuanian community only in his youth when he attended and supported cultural events. Following his involvement with unconventional artists, his contact with Lithuanians has declined, although he still occasionally donates work to Lithuanian causes through his parents who play an active part in Adelaide's Lithuanian cultural life.

Žiba Vilmanis,⁶⁰² painter, book illustrator and art teacher, is the eldest daughter of Birutė Westenberg. Born in 1945 in Kempton refugee camp in

⁶⁰² Her given name is Žibutė, meaning *violet*. Bioged details recorded in interview with the artist's mother 9 Jan 1989 and by letter from artist 12 Aug. 1989.

Germany, Vilmanis migrated to Australia with her family in 1950. They settled in Adelaide where she received her primary and secondary schooling. In 1962 she was awarded a scholarship to undertake teacher training and in 1964 graduated from the Western Technical College in South Australia. In the following year she commenced as a high school art teacher. After gaining a Diploma of Art Teaching in 1973, she travelled to Italy, Greece and Crete to do post-graduate study in art. In 1974 she attended summer seminars, passed the entrance examination in drawing to the Fine Art Academy in Rome, participated in a group art exhibition in Massa Mantana and visited a number of archaeological sites. On returning to Adelaide, Vilmanis resumed her high school teaching career as a senior art mistress. In 1975 she gained an Award of Merit for her drawing from the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. In 1979 she married musician Janis Vilmanis and their son was born in 1981. Since then she has travelled with her husband and son to England, France, Spain, Switzerland and Germany where she has visited art museums and investigated the teaching methods practised in Rudolf Steiner schools.

Vilmanis's work falls into two main periods: Realistic art of the seventies and a Mystic period of the eighties.

Realistic period: In her first solo exhibition, held at the Habndorf Gallery in South Australia in 1968, Vilmanis displayed still-life oils and realistic genre paintings. In her second solo exhibition in 1972, local historical sites dominated. In these she endeavoured to retain vanishing examples of Australian pioneering heritage: *Barn*, 1972 (ill. 418), for example, rendered in impressionist style, depicts man's achievement in a typically harsh and lonely Australian environment. The development of an allergic reaction to oil paint necessitated turning her attention to water-colour, pastel and drawing. In 1979 she held her third solo exhibition. The works shown were pastel studies of insects, animals and people, e.g. *Portrait*, 1979 (ill. 419). Here she endeavours to idealise the subject and to capture mood by sparse artistic means, ennobling the features of her sitter.

Mystic Period: In the eighties Vilmanis's fascination with history and archaeology increased. Lithuanian myths and legends, told to her in childhood by her mother, came back to the surface and expanded into the legends of other cultures. She developed a strong interest in spiritual perception, in the philosophy of Carl Jung and, especially, in the potential of myths to recapture ancestral memories. At this time she regarded an artist not as an individual indulging his or her self-expression, but as a medium who 'brings out everyday ways and things and subconscious images deriving from myths and dreams.' In

1981, on her return to Adelaide after a second European study tour, she met author Sue Chamberlain whom she describes as a kindred spirit. Inspired by Chamberlain, Vilmanis began to produce pastel paintings of Tarot symbols, the execution of which has required Jungian study of other cultures, religions and myths. *The High Priestess*, 1983 (ill. 420), is an example of this genre. The artist renders the priestess realistically and surrounds her with Egyptian, Indian, Christian and Islamic symbols as if to create a universal model. The painting is in bright blue monochrome to denote the divine significance. In 1984 the series of paintings was reproduced as Tarot cards. In 1985 Vilmanis produced the graphic illustrations for the publication, *Women in Multicultural Society*, commissioned by the Multicultural Education Coordinating Committee of South Australia. The illustrations are mainly realistic pencil drawings which depict migrant women from diverse cultural backgrounds in their Australian workplaces. In 1987 Vilmanis illustrated a children's book, *Soft Shoes*. During her early teaching career Vilmanis was active in the Lithuanian community and produced stage decorations and assisted in organizing Lithuanian literary evenings and other cultural events.

SECOND-GENERATION ARTISTS: AUSTRALIAN-BORN

Of these, there is but one. Painter, graphic artist, film maker, scenographer and illustrator **Rosemary Aliukonis**⁶⁰³ is the only second-generation, Australian-born artist working in Adelaide. The only child of Vincentas and Anna Elizabeth Aliukonis, she was born in Adelaide on 7 September 1950. Her father, a former forester, told many stories about the forests of his homeland and about the Lithuanian guerillas who lived in hiding there. Probably these childhood experiences increased her belief that trees, stones and shells are 'living receptacles for imprisoned spirits' and have influenced her painting. At an early age she showed a talent for drawing and was encouraged by her mother and by her art teacher, Helen Thiele, to study art. After matriculating from Seacombe High School in 1968, she enrolled at the South Australian School of Art. She enjoyed both sculpture and painting but, after winning a studentship in late 1968, decided to concentrate on painting, because, she says, 'of the possibility of greater precision of expression.' In 1969 she received a Commonwealth scholarship and in 1972 was awarded a Diploma of Fine Art, having gained a distinction in painting. In the same year she gained the John Christie Wright Memorial Prize for life drawing and the Royal South Australian Society of Arts Prize for composition. The former entitled her to a year's study of lithography

⁶⁰³ Biog/ed details recorded during interview with the artist 17 Jan. 1989.

at the South Australian School of Art. An Australian-German Exchange scholarship in 1974 enabled Aliukonis to do post-graduate study at Hamburg Art College and to improve her German at the Goethe Institute. Before leaving for overseas she held her first solo exhibition at the Llewellyn Galleries in North Adelaide. She displayed paintings, sculpture and graphics as well as an 'environmental happening' with special lighting effects and electronic music composed, using her ideas, by Richard Satchell.⁶⁰⁴ During 1975 Aliukonis studied graphic art, video-making and set design at Hamburg Art College. While there, she met and married an Iranian student from Australia. They returned together to Adelaide, but cultural and religious differences proved irreconcilable and they divorced in 1980. In 1986 Aliukonis moved to Sydney where she now works as a freelance artist and illustrator.

Her paintings and drawings are surrealistic, idiosyncratic renderings in symbolic images, executed with crisp clear lines and logical presentation. She believes that art is 'a way of expression of ideas and emotions' and that it is 'for everyone, and everyone can be an artist.' Rather than having the more usual surrealist desire to shock the viewer, she sets out to 'share with the onlooker ideas, emotions and thoughts about the world.' Her paintings have a purity and modesty and even the most dramatic statements are made with tranquil dignity. She uses everyday symbols such as animals, most often the tiger indicating power and callousness, and flowers and musical instruments suggesting fragility and sensitivity. To her a chessboard symbolises deliberate and calculated moves; dice denote chance and unpredictability. Her work exhibits order, sobriety and carefully planned composition and symbol selection. There is an austerity in her choice of colour and an economy of line, making her messages the more impressive. Her work includes political commentary and expressions of personal emotions and problems.

Aliukonis's active involvement in the seventies in anti-war movements is reflected in her paintings, e.g. *Beyond the Perimeter*, 1977 (ill. 421). This is an artistic statement warning of nuclear dangers. In the lower section of the painting can be seen symbols of ancient civilisations, unborn children and nuclear clouds. When massive demonstrations and freedom movements began in Lithuania in the late 1980s, her response was a solemn and moving pictorial statement: *Vilnius*, 1988. It represents Lithuania's emerging freedom in images of an open window with ripe fruit on the sill. Much of Aliukonis's work deals with the emotional waste-land of oppressed women, e.g. *Kuipito Tree Spirit*, 1978 (ill. 422). The forlorn nude, watched by a pale observer hiding among the top branches; the desolation of the setting sun; the bareness of the trees: all these elements echo the grief of the female and give a universal feeling of despair.

⁶⁰⁴ The 'environmental happening' took the form of a large, black plastic tent in which were pieces of furniture and a very large chessboard suspended upside-down from the ceiling.

Decision-making is portrayed in other pictures, e.g. *Loaded Dice*, 1982 (ill. 423). Here, woman, symbolised by the circus elephant balancing on a die, ponders two possibilities: to retreat into the shell and disappear from public view or to cross the 'Ass line' and continue the balancing act on an even smaller die. In *Queen of Sand*, 1982 (ill. 424), the decision has been made and the woman has retreated into the shell. The figures are placed in a barren landscape, emphasising the separateness of two different worlds. The joy of woman's independence after the death of a beast is expressed in a cheerful painting, *Shake the Leopard*, 1985 (ill. 425). Rosemary Aliukonis has participated in recent Lithuanian art exhibitions and in 1988 was awarded the V and G Kazokas prize for her painting, *Vilnius* (ill. 426).

LATECOMERS TO ART

Just as the Adelaide Lithuanian community had been reluctant to accept some of the Vanguard artists, it was even more reluctant to acknowledge those who comprise the group of Latecomers: Vaclovas Rydlinskis (1895-1959), Mečys Rudzėnskas (1910-1986) and Pranas Savenis, b. 1913. Indeed, these artists became the centre of controversy and much unpleasant feeling. In 1958, with the approach of the Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition, held in Melbourne and sponsored by the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council, the selection committee in Adelaide rejected the work of many Adelaide artists. This was an unprecedented and unwarranted action, particularly since the committee, with the exception of artist Leonas Žygas, consisted of lay people. Great bitterness and resentment resulted. When Adelaide held its first Lithuanian Days festival in 1962, no artist there was willing to organize a combined art exhibition. Instead, a number of smaller displays were arranged by individuals: Vytautas Vosylius organised an art-photography exhibition at Lithuanian House; a small display of folk art was arranged at the same venue by Ieva Pocius; poker-work artists Kudirka and Daugalis mounted a small display at the Forestville Sports Hall;⁶⁰⁵ and an enthusiastic group of students, among them Daugalis and Žiba Westenberg, set up yet another at the Lithuanian Catholic centre at St. Peters.⁶⁰⁶ Such fragmentation and lack of co-ordination diminished the impact of the artistic side of the festival and caused one reviewer to state that 'visual art ... was the weakest part of the Lithuanian Days program'.⁶⁰⁷

The negative attitude towards the Latecomers was further demonstrated when in 1968 they were not invited to exhibit at the Lithuanian Art Exhibition

⁶⁰⁵ *Mūsų Paslogė*, 16 Jan. 1963.

⁶⁰⁶ *Tėviškės Aidai*, 29 Jan. 1963.

⁶⁰⁷ *Mūsų Paslogė*, 16 Jan. 1963.

taking place in their own city. Adelaide was represented by second-generation artists Žilba Westenberg and Vytas Šerelis and by Gražina Firinauskas who, at that time had moved from Melbourne to Adelaide. Again, in 1974, only 'recognised artists' were invited to exhibit.⁶⁰⁸ These included Rosemary Aliukonis, Aurimas Dumčius, Vytas Kapočiūnas, Ieva Pocius, Vytas Šerelis and Leonas Žygas. The organizers gave as a major reason for their selection their belief that the resulting high quality of work would attract the attention of the Australian art world. This in fact did happen. Art critic David Dolan wrote:

'Lithuanian Artists in Australia', a thoroughly worthwhile exhibition, commenced on Boxing Day and finished on New Year's Day. It might as well have been cancelled before it began ... Its chief value was in demonstrating to the local Lithuanian community, and to the rest of us just how many good artists Australia has gained from that country in the post-war years ... Rosemary Aliukonis, Aurimas Dumčius, Ieva Pocius and Vytas Šerelis are well known names in the art world, but few of us realised they are all Lithuanians.⁶⁰⁹

The selectivity of the exhibition no doubt raised the standard but caused bitterness and a deep sense of rejection among the older artists, Vanguard and Latecomers alike. Since then, from time to time, Latecomers have organized their own solo and group shows at Lithuanian House.

The Latecomers in Adelaide fall into two sub-groups: the first sub-group includes those who began to exhibit in the late fifties: Vaclovas Rydlinskis, Mečys Rudzinskis and Pranas Savenis. The second includes those who did not begin to exhibit until the eighties: Bronė Mockūnas, Birutė Westenberg and Vilia Dunda.

Painter Vaclovas Rydlinskis (1895-1959)⁶¹⁰ was born on 30 September 1895, in Ašmena in the county of Vilnius. After completing high school in Pskov in Russia, he studied at the Art Academy of St. Petersburg. It appears that he interrupted his art studies to undergo training at the Military Academy in Irkutsk, near the Russo-Mongolian border. During the 1918 Lithuanian struggle for independence, he fought in the Lithuanian army. After World War I he worked as a public servant in Kaunas and pursued art purely as a spare-time activity.

⁶⁰⁸ As told to the author by organizers of the exhibition.

⁶⁰⁹ David Dolan, *Advertiser*, Adelaide, 26 Dec. 1974.

⁶¹⁰ Bio/ed details given by letter dated 18 July 1990 from the artist's son Eugene to author. Other information supplied by Bronius Straukas, Vladas Dumčius and others in Adelaide at various times.

In 1944 Rydlinskis fled to the West where he eventually found refuge in a displaced persons camp in Hamburg. In 1949 he migrated to Australia with his wife and four children and settled in Adelaide.

Although Rydlinskis painted in watercolour he was better known as the only male artist in Lithuania who produced needle-work with Lithuanian folk-art themes. No examples of his needle-work are available in Australia but his work is well remembered. His watercolour landscapes are academic, their composition based on long horizontals with only a few vertical interceptions. His restricted palette of autumn colours give his works an air of nostalgia and sadness. His themes are reminiscent of his Lithuanian past, e.g. *Autumn*, 1952 (ill. 427), and *Autumn in Ašmena*, 1957 (ill. 428). Leonas Žygas commented: 'It seems that Rydlinskis will aptly fill the space left in Adelaide by the departure of Antanas Rūkštelė to the USA.'⁶¹¹ Rydlinskis held two solo exhibitions of watercolours, the first in Germany and the other at Adelaide Lithuanian House in 1957. In 1958 he participated in a group exhibition by six Lithuanian painters at Lithuanian House; in the same year his work was shown in the Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Melbourne. As a member from the fifties of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts he also took part in its exhibitions.

Painter Mečys Rudzenskas (1910-1986)⁶¹² was born on 24 April 1910 in Riga, Latvia. After World War I his parents returned to their farm in the Lithuanian county of Šiauliai. In 1927 he completed high school where he had shown a talent for painting. Rudzenskas enrolled at the University of Lithuania in Kaunas as a part-time law student and studied concurrently at the Military Academy. He graduated from both institutions in 1932 and then worked as a secretary at the Military Court.

In 1944, with his wife and son Rimas, he fled to southern Germany where they eventually found refuge at Schwabisch Gmünd camp. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. During his two-year work contract he was employed as a timber-cutter; he then worked at the Pilkington glass factory until he retired in 1975.

His dream of being a full-time painter was not realised until after his retirement. Although trained as a lawyer and an army officer, he had also attended the Kaunas School of Art as a non-degree student for a brief period. As far as is known, he began painting seriously only after arriving in Australia but it is possible that he had also painted in Germany. He was reticent about his artistic activities and did not exhibit, but gave many of his paintings to friends.

⁶¹¹ *Mūsų Pastogė*, 29 Sept. 1958.

⁶¹² Biog/d details recorded in interview with the artist 10 July 1985.

His realistic, romantic landscapes of his homeland are usually idealised and executed in watercolours or oils. His most frequent subjects are winter scenes, still and pure, e.g. *Farmstead in Winter*, 1975 (ill. 429). His palette is muted and he prefers a monochromatic rendering, e.g. *Baublys*, 1976 (ill. 430), which shows an historic oak tree, the hollow base of which was used as a studio by 19th century writer Dionyzas Poška. In most of his works, Rudzenskas employs a classical, closed composition, e.g. *Morning in Winter*, 1957 (ill. 431). His brushstrokes are short and tentative and lightly applied.

Rudzenskas was an active member of the Lithuanian community: in 1953 he was elected president of the Lithuanian Cultural Foundation; he was also president of the Adelaide Lithuanian Community Council; and in 1976-77 was a director of the Lithuanian Museum. He worked also in the Lithuanian Library and in the archives at Lithuanian House. He belonged to a number of other Lithuanian organizations. Rudzenskas died in 1986.

Pranas Savenis⁶¹³ was also a painter and was born on 22 September 1913 in Raseiniai. He remembers that at primary school he showed a talent for drawing. He did not receive further education and after leaving school he was employed as a factory-worker. In 1940 he was among the many Lithuanians forcibly conscripted by the Nazis and transported to work in Germany. After the war he studied painting in Vienna and, during a stay at the Bavarian refugee camp of Traustein, produced stage decorations for the local Lithuanian theatre.

In 1948 Savenis and his wife and son migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. On completion of a two-year contract with the Railways Department he worked as a carpenter. For three years he attended Adult Education classes in oil painting with a focus on landscape. Savenis assisted in the production of decorations for the Lithuanian Theatre and in the interior decoration of Lithuanian House. In 1958 he was one of six Adelaide Lithuanian artists who exhibited their work at Lithuanian House and he was a regular exhibitor in the *Advertiser's* outdoor art exhibitions until about 1970 when he suffered a stroke. Very little is known about the present whereabouts of his paintings.

In the late seventies and the eighties the Lithuanian artistic situation in Adelaide began to change. The recognised artists were often overseas or pre-occupied with their own affairs and a number of the most senior artists died: Neliubšys in 1976, Žygas and Kudirka in 1980 and Rudzenskas in 1986. The artistic void

⁶¹³ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 11 Jan. 1989.

was filled, not by the second-generation artists, but by the second sub-group of Latecomers, all women: painters Bronė Mockūnas, b. 1918; Birutė Westenberg, b. 1924, and ceramist Vilia Dunda, b. 1937. Each came to art in a different way.

Painter, author, linguist and teacher **Bronė Mockūnas**⁶¹⁴ was born on 2 August 1918, the youngest of seven children, in Virbalai village in the county of Kretinga. In 1938, after completing study at Rokiškis High School, she enrolled at the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas to study French language and literature. In 1940 she transferred to the University of Vilnius and added German and History of Art to her studies. In 1944 she fled to Germany where she married Jonas Mockūnas, an economist. They migrated to Australia in 1948 and went to live in Adelaide. Although she was fluent in six languages, she was given work as a kitchen hand. She and her husband were active in the Lithuanian community: Bronė Mockūnas taught Lithuanian language and literature, organized literature and poetry readings, was a regular contributor to the Lithuanian press, and in 1978 published her first novel, *Saulėlydis* (The Sunset) for which she received a literature prize from the Lithuanian Scouts Organization.

Following the death of her husband, in 1975 Mockūnas attended Further Education classes in ceramics, and in 1977 joined a painting class which she attended for five years, later studying privately under Robert Hunnford. Her themes are landscape and still life. Her early works are impressionistic, e.g. *White Fields of Homeland*, 1976 (ill. 432). From about 1980 Mockūnas experimented with colour and her oil paintings became rhythmic and brightly hued statements, e.g. *Flowers*, 1980 (ill. 433). As seen in the strong composition of *Oasis*, 1983 (ill. 434), her paintings developed into expressionistic, exuberant interpretations. *Oasis* shows how she had begun to omit distracting details and focus on essentials: the clump of trees is coloured in high key and the remaining, plain landscape serves as a neutral background and emphasises the dominant subject.

Since 1977 Bronė Mockūnas has participated regularly in Lithuanian and Art School exhibitions. In 1984 and 1988 she held solo exhibitions of her works at Adelaide Lithuanian House.

Painter **Birutė Westenberg**⁶¹⁵ was born in Kaunas on 30 September 1924. She showed talent for drawing and watercolour at high school and was

⁶¹⁴ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 1 Jan. 1989.

⁶¹⁵ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 9 Jan. 1989.

encouraged by her father Juozas Kvietkauskas whose hobby was painting, by her uncle Mečys Buloka, a painter and lecturer at the Vilnius Academy of Art, and by her high school teacher Masijėvas. In 1942 she completed studies at Vilnius High School and in 1944 fled to Germany. Her longest stay was in the Kempten refugee camp where she married and where her first daughter, Žiba, was born. In 1950 the family migrated to Australia. After fulfilling their two-year working contracts, she and her husband set up a small delicatessen business which failed in 1959. As well as bankruptcy, that year brought her illness and divorce from her husband and, left with two children, she believes she regained her health by turning to art. 'Only painting gives me solace and strength to live', she says.

Her themes are idealised landscapes of lonely and tranquil places, far from the bustle of the city. Everything in her work -- composition, colour, subject and technique -- is balanced, harmonious and serene. She paints in realistic style, with great attention to detail; her technique is meticulous, with small, tight, delicate brushstrokes. Her colour range is restricted and comprises soft browns and subdued greens, as in *Roadside*, 1983 (ill. 435) and *Rivulet in the Valley*, 1984 (ill. 436). The atmosphere of these works is peaceful and unmistakably Australian. *Wooded Slopes*, 1985 (ill. 437), on the other hand is a portrayal of an idealised European scene.

In 1970 Westenberg joined the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and the South Coast Artists Society and has contributed regularly to their exhibitions as well as to Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Vilia Dunda⁶¹⁶ is a ceramist and ceramics teacher. The only child of Vytautas Petruškevičius, an Air Force officer, and Anastazija, a teacher, she was born on 10 August 1937, in Kaunas. In 1944 the family fled to Austria and stayed in the Reid refugee camp where Vilia attended primary school. In 1949 they arrived in Australia and settled in Adelaide. Vilia matriculated from St. Aloysius Girls High School in 1954 and then began the study of science at Adelaide University. In 1956 she married Algis Dunda, an engineer, and they have four children.

Dunda says that her first encounter with art was in early childhood when she was enchanted by coloured illustrations in *Eglutė* (Little Fir Tree), a popular children's magazine of the time. She long had an ambition to become an illustrator, but this changed when she saw Eleonora Marčiulionis's ceramics at Lithuanian art exhibitions in Adelaide. In 1970 she began attending Adult Education pottery classes and in 1972 held her first solo exhibition at Lithuanian

⁶¹⁶ Originally spelt Vilija, but for ease of pronunciation has been changed to Vilia. Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 8 Jan. 1989.

House. The Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Association in 1973 invited her to conduct an introductory pottery course. While employed as a real estate agent she attended Technical and Further Education pottery classes at Kingston Technical College. She graduated in 1982 and began teaching pottery at Christies Beach under the Commonwealth Youth Support Scheme.

Dunda's work falls into two categories: pottery and sculptured ceramics. In all her work form, rather than colour, is her major concern. Her decorative plates, platters, vases and urns have conventional, well balanced form and feature Lithuanian motifs, either incised or embossed. The ratio of decoration to surface shows her restraint and, in conjunction with the monochromatic treatment, gives her work simplicity and serenity. In *Large Plate*, 1984 (ill. 438), the decorative pattern is incised and oxidised and the surface is very thinly glazed. Dunda's sculptured ceramics consist of modelled figurines which exhibit lively movement and many decorative details of folk-art origin. The surfaces are monochromatic, glazed and thickly textured, imitating the texture of the objects portrayed: straw hats whirling skirts and girls' plaits. In the 1988 Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Adelaide Dunda was awarded the V and G Kazokas prize in the sculpture section for her ceramic group of six figurines, *Be Greeted* (ill. 439).

FOLK ARTISTS

In Adelaide, as in other Lithuanian centres in Australia, traditional sash weaving is taught at Lithuanian weekend schools and Scouts gatherings. Demonstrations have also been given for the Australian public: for many years former medical practitioner, Janina Maželis, b.1912, was the principal demonstrator of sash weaving at art and craft exhibitions, schools, festivals and fairs. In 1971, another weaver, Eugenija Šimkus, b.1910, moved to Adelaide and both women have shown their woven sashes regularly in the folk-art section of Lithuanian Days art exhibitions. Several other women folk-artists produce decorative straw items, the origins of which date back to wedding rituals of pagan times. Valentina Vens, b.1915, is well known as an Easter egg decorator as well as the producer of metal bas-reliefs which portray scenes from dainos (songs) and proverbs.

Folk-art carving in Adelaide is a rather neglected art form. Jonas Langevičius, b.1902, produced several decorated kanklės and a number of utensils with folk-art motifs. Leonardas Kanas, b.1909, has carved individualised interpretations of Lithuanian gods and goddesses. Aloyzas Kviklys (1916-1992) led a secluded life and it was not until after his death that

Lithuanians became aware of his carvings or even that he had been living in Adelaide.

Artist, potter and weaver **Janina Maželis**,⁶¹⁷ *nee* Skibniauskaitė, was born on 7 August 1912, in Kaunas. In 1932, after matriculating from Šiauliai Girls High School, she enrolled at the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas to study medicine. In 1936 she married Antanas Maželis, a student in law. Both graduated in 1938. In 1944 they fled with their two young daughters to Freiburg-im-Breisgau. There her husband was a secretary at L'École des Arts et Métiers. In 1947 the Maželis family migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. Janina Maželis worked as a laboratory assistant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital until her retirement in 1977. In exile, weaving for her became much more than a hobby. She says, like so many other folk artists, she feels that her weaving is proof of her personal allegiance to old Lithuanian traditions and that the revival and dissemination of this art form is a gratifying experience. She participates regularly in shows where her tastefully woven sashes attract attention. Her technique is precise and she uses fine wool and cotton. Maželis says she enjoys experimenting with single motifs; she achieves originality in her designs without losing the authenticity of Lithuanian folk art (ill. 440). Following the death in 1971 of her daughter and in 1975 of her husband she turned to pottery. In 1972 she attended a private pottery course held at Christies Beach and conducted by Vilia Dunda under the sponsorship of the Lithuanian Women's Welfare Society. From 1975 to 1977 she undertook a pottery course at Adult Education classes in Sherbarton. From 1978 to 1981 she studied pottery at classes held at Flinders University.

Maželis's pottery and various ceramic items are traditional, decorated with folk-art motifs which are incised, embossed or separately modelled and joined to the object. Her glazes vary in colour, but the prevailing hues are light and lambent, as in *Distaff*, 1980 (ill. 441).

Weaver **Eugenija Šimkus**⁶¹⁸ was born on 17 June 1910 in Nervočiai village in the county of Kretinga. Her mother, an avid reader -- quite unusual in those days -- enlivened the evenings by reading aloud stories and tales of adventure in other lands. Perhaps this excited young Eugenija's imagination and caused her to strive for individuality in her weaving, favouring large formats, bright colours and innovations on traditional patterns. She preferred weaving large tablecloths and bedspreads on big looms. In 1944, she and her husband left

⁶¹⁷ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 14 Jan. 1989.

⁶¹⁸ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 7 Jan. 1989.

their farm and, with their two small children, fled to the West. In 1949, they migrated to Australia and settled in Geelong in Victoria. Later, when her children, members of the national dance group, needed sashes for their costumes, Šimkus began to weave for all the group members (ill. 442). Since 1971, Šimkus and her husband have lived in Adelaide and she has participated regularly in the folk-art section of Lithuanian art exhibitions and in local ethnic craft shows.

Maker of ornamental Lithuanian musical instruments, **Jonas Langevičius**⁶¹⁹ was born, one of four children, at Užpaliai in the county of Utena on 29 October 1902. His father Juozapas was a carpenter who taught the craft to his son. In 1944 Langevičius fled to the West, eventually arriving at Osterode refugee camp in Germany. There he acted as a representative for the International Red Cross and was also elected camp supervisor. In 1949 he and his wife migrated to Australia. On completion of his two-year work contract as a coal-miner at Leigh Creek (South Australia) he worked as a carpenter and later opened a small carpentry business in Adelaide. Langevičius is the only person in Adelaide who manufactures ornamented Lithuanian musical instruments. His *kanklės* (Lithuanian zithers) are very popular. He also produces items with Lithuanian folk art motifs: jewellery boxes, picture frames and similar wooden articles. He and his wife have been active members of the Lithuanian community and long-serving members of the combined choir.

Folk carver **Leonardas Henrikas Kanas**⁶²⁰ was born on 1 January 1909, on the Sesertis estate in the county of Ukmergė. He began to develop his artistic talent while still at high school in Panevėžys and he was often asked to provide stage decorations for school theatrical performances and to draw portraits of friends and teachers. Although he had hoped to study art, he complied with his father's wish that he study surveying and graduated from Kaunas Technical College in 1930. A gregarious person, he was involved in many charitable organisations and produced stage sets and decorations for their fund raising activities in Lithuania. After migrating to Australia in 1949, he spent two years as a labourer with the South Australian Railways Department and was later promoted to a position as draftsman and civil engineer. Over a long period he has assisted with stage decor for Lithuanian theatrical productions in Adelaide. In 1955 Kanas began carving. Pagan gods and goddesses and Lithuanian historical heroes caught his imagination, e.g. *Medeinė*, 1962 (ill. 443) and *The*

⁶¹⁹ Biogled details recorded in interview with the artist 2 Jan. 1989.

⁶²⁰ Biogled details recorded in interview with the artist 12 Jan. 1989.

God Perkūnas (God of Thunder), 1980 (ill. 444). Most of his carvings are produced from driftwood: gnarled and twisted tree-roots and branches are used to create characters from mythology, history and literature, as in *Dante's Inferno*, 1970 (ill. 445). He also produces functional items with carved or painted folk-art motifs, e.g. *Lantern*, 1975 (ill. 446).

Kanas has participated in Lithuanian and other ethnic art and craft exhibitions and in the *Advertiser* outdoor exhibitions.

Folk artist **Valentina Vens**⁶²¹ has found ways to express her artistic talent without having had the benefit of any formal training. She was born on 21 May 1915, one of twelve children of Mykolas and Emilija Skepenaitis in Vaiguva in the West Lithuanian county of Kuršėnai. After leaving primary school she began work and eventually became a supervisor in a weaving factory at Klaipėda. She married actor Jonas Venslovavičius in 1939 and in 1944 the couple fled to the West, their longest stay in a refugee camp being at Oker in Harz in Germany where Valentina worked as a kindergarten aide. In 1948 she and her husband migrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. Vens' artistic ability manifests itself in many forms. During the late fifties her main creative outlet was making dolls dressed in Lithuanian national costume. She won first prize for two consecutive years in the annual Best Dressed Doll competition sponsored by John Martin's Department Store in Adelaide. During the sixties she worked with copper, a popular medium at that time, and produced Lithuanian landscapes and interior scenes in bas-relief.

In the seventies she regained her childhood interest in colouring and decorating Easter eggs. She had learned the traditional art in her home village where the giving of elaborately decorated eggs was a long-established custom. The traditional methods of decoration are waxing and etching and Vens prefers to use the latter. For a considerable time she worked within the original frame of representation but more recently, in order to appeal to a wider audience, she has extended the images she uses to include Christian and national symbols (ill. 447). In 1970, 1971, 1980 and 1981 she was an entrant in the Easter Egg Decorating Competitions sponsored jointly by the Adelaide newspaper, the *News*, and the South Australian Egg Marketing Board; on each occasion she gained first prize. The *News* reported: 'The entry of Mrs Vens was described as "outstanding" by the contest judges.'⁶²²

Vens participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions as well as various Australian shows. In 1983 her work was displayed in the Lithuanian

⁶²¹ Vens is a shortened version of Venslovavičienė. Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 10 Jan 1989 and in letters (undated).

⁶²² *News*, Adelaide, 8 Apr. 1971.

Folk Art Exhibition held at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Her decorated eggs are also displayed at the Folk Art Museum in Vilnius.

It was not until after his recent death that the general Lithuanian community became aware that Aloyzas Kviklys (1916-1992)⁶²³ had worked as a folk artist in Adelaide. Like many other Lithuanians, he had been deeply affected by his experience of Soviet oppression and lived in intense apprehension and mistrust, to the extent that he severed ties with acquaintances and with his own family. He did not communicate with his sisters Apoloniija and Veronika in Lithuania for fear that they might suffer reprisal if the Soviets discovered they had a brother living overseas.

Kviklys was born in 1916 into a farming family in the county of Vilnius. Details of his early life are sketchy; it is known that he completed secondary school presumably in Vilnius, and that he had been encouraged by one of his high school teachers to pursue an art career: he became proficient in five languages and was fond of writing poetry. During the German occupation of Lithuania he was captured and sent to work in Germany; after the war he lived for a time in a refugee camp in the American zone in Germany. He migrated to Australia, arriving in Sydney in 1952. Before going to live in Adelaide he worked on an outback station in New South Wales, was a sugar-cane cutter in Queensland and a timber-worker in the Gippsland region in Victoria. In Adelaide he married and after becoming widowed, married Australian pianist Rona Evelyn Hochuli in 1977.

During a brief period in Sydney he enrolled in art classes but did not continue, most probably it is thought because he was uncomfortable with modern art trends and the lack of realism. He attempted to become a portrait painter and when this did not afford him a living, he learned carpentry and worked in that trade until his retirement. It was only then that he was able to devote time to carving and he was greatly encouraged by his wife Rona.

Kviklys's carvings are executed in realistic style and are based entirely on folk art and images seen in the church of his childhood. Although he did not show much piety during his lifetime and was not committed to any organized religion, towards the end of his life he was commissioned by his brother-in-law to carve fourteen pieces, *Stations of the Cross*, 1985 (ill. 448), for St. Martin's Church at Paradise in Adelaide. These wood bas-reliefs displayed his dexterity, sense of composition and ability to depict human emotions. All of the characters in this work are ordinary folk and are portrayed as deeply absorbed in their

⁶²³ Biographical information supplied by his widow, Rona Kviklys in letter dated 5 Aug. 1992 and in telephone conversations. Information also given by Fr. Juozas Petraitis 5 Aug. 1992.

actions. His *Sorrowful God*, 1987 (ill. 449), and *Mother and Child*, 1989 (ill. 450), are examples of his three-dimensional work, the subjects of which are modelled on ordinary persons. The Lithuanian church of St. Kazimieras in Adelaide also commissioned from him several statuettes and religious symbols. At Kviklys's cremation funeral service some of his poetry, written in English, was read as part of the ceremony.

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTING ARTISTS

At various times in Adelaide, almost all the artists of the Vanguard group provided stage decorations and properties for the Lithuanian Theatre Studio. Others were responsible for the decoration of buildings for special occasions, Algirdas Kudirka being the central person in the decoration of Lithuanian House. As time went by and the Vanguard artists were no longer able to carry out these tasks, younger community members took over.

Chief among them was Vytautas Opulskis.⁶²⁴ Between 1971 and 1981 he was responsible for thirteen stage sets. He worked at first in realistic style, later gradually simplifying images and producing highly stylised scenography.

The only child of Tomas and Genovaitė (nee Mačiukaičė) Opulskis, he was born in Alsėdžiai in Western Lithuania on 14 July 1930. He began his secondary education in Telšiai and, after fleeing to West Germany in 1944, continued studies in the Dillingen refugee camp. His family's migration to Australia in 1949 again interrupted his schooling. After settling in Adelaide, Opulskis gained carpentry and building qualifications. Since 1971 he has worked as a site foreman for the South Australian Housing Trust. His Australian-born wife has learned Lithuanian, is a Lithuanian choir member and acts as wardrobe mistress for Lithuanian theatre productions. His interest in the theatre began in refugee camps and since 1949 he has been active in Lithuanian theatrical life in Adelaide, first as a student, later an actor, and later still, decorator, administrator and producer. He is a foundation member of the choir, Lithuania, and also sings in the local Lithuanian church choir and in the male octet, Klajūnas (Wanderer). For some thirty years he was a member and leader of the Adelaide Lithuanian Scouts.

Opulskis learned the basics of stage decor in Australia from artists Stasys Neliubšys and Aleksandras Marčiulionis. His first assignment was the set for Antanas Rūkas's exile-comedy, *Vieno kiemo gyventojai* (The Residents

⁶²⁴ Information from article by Jonas Neverauskas in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 162 and letter dated 14 Sept. 1989.

of the Courtyard), 1971 (ill. 451), for which he created a realistic post-war set. Over time, Opulskis became more deeply involved in the theatre and developed greater insights into the background of the plays for which he designed sets, e.g. *Žvejai* (The Fishermen), 1980 (ill. 452). Opulskis writes, 'Historical plays require a detailed knowledge of the period but legends and poems allow much more freedom of interpretation.' He demonstrated this in the dramatic play by Justinas Marcinkevičius, *King Mindaugas*, 1981, for which he was also a producer. The photograph of the stage setting shows his bold, stylised and simplified, imaginative work. By keeping decoration to a minimum his intention was to allow more working space for the actors (ill. 453).

ADELAIDE: AN OVERVIEW

There were indications in the early fifties that Adelaide would become the centre of Lithuanian cultural activity in Australia: the city had become home to a greater number than elsewhere of established Lithuanian visual artists. As well, there resided there a playwright and several former opera singers, experienced actors, folk-dance teachers and instrumentalists. It was anticipated that leadership and organization might well come from the twenty or so former Lithuanian lawyers who had also settled in Adelaide.

The expected outcome did not, however, eventuate. After a brief initial period during which the community and artists worked closely together under the leadership of painter Antanas Rūkštelė, the community became divided and supportive interaction between artists and the community lessened. Several factors were responsible for this: Rūkštelė and others artists including Aleksandras and Eleonora Marčiulionis, left to live in the USA; following their departure, the community did not accord the same degree of recognition to the artists who remained in Adelaide; tensions developed between artists and the community; the Catholics, the largest section of the community, began to engage in a programme of religious activity that precluded their taking part in the secular activities organized by general community members. Even greater fragmentation occurred when the two groups established separate weekend schools, women's organizations and community venues with a consequent weakening of cultural and economic resources. In the late sixties Lithuanians in Adelaide, as in Sydney and Melbourne, became further divided as a result of opposing reactions to visits to Australia by Soviet Lithuanian performers and politicians.

In 1970, although it became the seat of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council, Adelaide failed to establish itself as the centre of

Lithuanian activity. It seemed that, since the departure of Rūkštelė, there were no artists able to gain community esteem in the way that he had.

During the seventies, when several members of the second generation were emerging as artists, there was no coordinating community organisation, and these young artists did not become part of a cohesive group. Disputes within the general Lithuanian community caused them to distance themselves from most Lithuanian activities and to concentrate individually on their careers. They have not been accorded community support or understanding in ways that have occurred in most other Lithuanian centres.

The work of most Adelaide artists is predominantly figurative and realistic with symbolic and metaphysical references. Dumčius is the only artist there to have worked consistently in abstract style. It would seem that most Lithuanian artists in Adelaide artists, however, share a common belief in art as a vehicle of ideas.

CHAPTER 7

LITHUANIANS IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES:

CANBERRA, NEWCASTLE, TASMANIA, PERTH, BALLARAT,
BRISBANE, BEECHWORTH, WOLLONGONG.

Across the world's wide screen

The play moves on:

Who knows how things will turn out finally?

Author unknown

(Translated from original Lithuanian)

LITHUANIANS IN CANBERRA

When Lithuanians first arrived in Canberra in 1948, the city was still young and its total population only about 60,000. On completion of their two-year work contracts, many young men, despite the friendly welcome they had often experienced, began to move to larger centres of Lithuanian population.⁶²⁵ Of those who remained, a number were joined by their wives and children. By 1954, Canberra's Lithuanian community numbered 220: 87 men, of whom 23 were unmarried; 68 women, including four unmarried; and 65 children.⁶²⁶

In 1990 Lithuanians in Canberra were predominantly persons with higher educational qualifications and often employed as white-collar workers. The community is close-knit. Dr. Antanas Stepanas, b. 1943 president of the Canberra Australian Lithuanian Community states: 'The prevailing principle in the community [is] the mutual close relationship ... Canberra ... has never been adversely affected by the political, religious fight which divided the larger Lithuanian communities in Australia'.⁶²⁷ The majority of families are of mixed nationality as many Lithuanians are married to Australians. Many are involved in various political and cultural activities. At community meetings both Lithuanian and English are used and, because of the small numbers in the

⁶²⁵ In Dec. 1988 Jurgis Mikševičius recalled in interview with author: 'Canberra was young and sparsely populated and people were glad to have neighbours'.

⁶²⁶ Julius Veteikis in *Metraštinis*, Vol. 1, p. 196

⁶²⁷ *40 metų*, 1990, p. 74

community, the same people are often involved in several organizations at the same time.⁶²⁸

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The local Australian Lithuanian Association was formed in 1949 and in the following year became the Canberra Lithuanian Community with an elected council and joined the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council.⁶²⁹ Since the beginning there has been close cooperation with the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations in Canberra.

One of the early tasks of the Canberra Lithuanian Community Council was to arrange Lithuanian participation in the 1949 European Nations festival organized by the YMCA and YWCA: a folk-art exhibition was arranged by Rama Genys, folk-dance demonstrations were given and an extensive collection of Lithuanian postage stamps was exhibited by Vladas Biveinis.⁶³⁰

In 1950 the local Lithuanian Community Council was made up largely of artists resident in Canberra, and included Jurgis Mikševičius, Algirdas Šimkūnas and Henry Šalkauskas. In that year, together with painters Juozas Kalgovas and Jurgis Bistrickas, they participated in a New Australian Arts and Crafts Exhibition held at Canberra's Albert Hall. In 1951 the Department of Immigration arranged a travelling exhibition of arts and crafts by New Australians; it visited all Australian capital cities during the next two years. The curator of the Lithuanian section was Jurgis Bistrickas who travelled throughout Australia with the exhibition.

Lithuanians in Canberra received special patronage from the French Ambassador to Australia at that time, M. Jean Marie Padovani.⁶³¹ He helped greatly in fostering Lithuanian involvement in general community activities. Following the activism of the early fifties, cultural life in Canberra moved at a slower pace until two specific events stirred the community into action. The first was in 1974 when Prime Minister Whitlam gave *de jure* recognition to Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. Strong adverse reaction came from Lithuanians living in Canberra. Immediately, full-scale lobbying began: within two days, eighty telegrams of protest had been sent to parliamentary members and all sections of the Australian press.⁶³² As in other Australian centres of Baltic population, demonstrations and protest rallies were held.

⁶²⁸ *ibid*

⁶²⁹ *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 196

⁶³⁰ *ibid*, p. 197

⁶³¹ *See* p. 100

⁶³² Viktoras Martišius in *Metrašius*, Vol. 2, p. 215

In 1982, at the conclusion of the biennial Lithuanian Days festival in Melbourne, the Canberra community was again roused. At a meeting of the Federal Australian Lithuanian Community Council, ambitious members of the younger generation sought permission to change the established rotational location of the festival. They requested that the next Lithuanian Days, due to be held in 1984, should be held in Canberra instead of Sydney. Although there was some resistance to this from the Federal Council, on the grounds that the small community in Canberra might not be able to deal with the estimated 2,000 visitors and the extensive festival program, the enthusiastic efforts of the Canberra Lithuanians resulted in a highly successful event.

Unlike the major centres of Lithuanian population, Canberra has no organized Catholic community.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Folk-dance Groups

Over the years there has been a succession of folk-dance groups. The first was organized by Rama Genys in 1949;⁶³³ in 1952 Lilija Velioniškytė organized a group which lasted into the sixties with a number of changes in leadership and dancers.⁶³⁴ Other groups were set up in 1963, 1966, 1972 and 1978, the last organized by Audronė Kovalskis.⁶³⁵

Weekend School

In 1952 the Canberra Lithuanian Community Council established a weekend school which operated at various private premises.⁶³⁶ The first teacher was Vanda Žilinskas⁶³⁷ and the school was attended by some ten children of Lithuanian and mixed-nationality backgrounds. In the late sixties, Scouts leaders Viktorija Keraitis, b. 1917 and Petras Pilka (1921-1978) merged their scouting activities with teaching, and the school continued until 1974.⁶³⁸

⁶³³ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 197

⁶³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 199

⁶³⁵ *Metrašius*, Vol. 2, pp. 218-220

⁶³⁶ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 198

⁶³⁷ *ibid.*

⁶³⁸ *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 224

Musical Groups

In 1950, Pranas Darius, (1919-1993) formed and conducted a double male quartet which existed for some ten years.⁶³⁹ In 1964, he organized the Aušra (Dawn) mixed choir of between thirty and forty singers. Their work was of a high standard and performances were given for both Lithuanian and Australian audiences. During its ten-year existence, the choir was the focal point of Lithuanian cultural activity in Canberra.

Šviesa (Light) Organization

This was formed in 1953 and operated in close conjunction with the Šviesa Organization in Sydney. Its program over the next ten years or so included lectures by both Lithuanians and Australians, often politicians, literary evenings and poetry readings by local Lithuanian writers, among them Elzė Ratas, Antanas Gasiūnas, Petras Pilka, Antanas Jarašas and Aigis Butavičius.⁶⁴⁰

Theatre-Lovers Group

This was founded in 1955 by poet and actor Antanas Gasiūnas (1922-1990). Several plays were staged and the group was active until Gasiūnas left Canberra for Sydney in the early seventies.

Students Organization

In 1956 for a brief time Lithuanian students in Canberra met regularly but activities were discontinued after the first three students graduated.⁶⁴¹

Press and Radio

In 1960 *Canberos žinių biuletenis* (The Canberra News Bulletin) began publication under the auspices of the Canberra Lithuanian Community Council and was edited and administered by the Scouts Organization. The bulletin continued to provide announcements and local news items until 1976 when it was replaced by a weekly half-hour community radio program. The

⁶³⁹ *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 199

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 198

⁶⁴¹ *ibid.*

programme's licensees Gintautas Kaminskas, b. 1945 and Jūras Kovalskis, b. 1935, have been responsible since the inception for the overall supervision of the programmes which they prepare with the help of volunteers.⁶⁴²

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Scouting

The Canberra Scouts Organization was established in 1958 by Petras Pilka and comprised some thirty to forty girls and boys. In 1961 a folk-dance group was formed. Particular attention was also given to teaching Lithuanian and in the late sixties scouts leaders accepted responsibility for conducting the weekend school. Rimas Keraitis, who later became a sculptor, was an active scouts leader for many years.⁶⁴³

Sports Club

Although Lithuanians played basketball in Canberra from the time of their arrival in 1948, it was not until 1960 that the Vilkas (Wolf) Sports Club was established. Tennis, table tennis and skiing were included and club members participated in Lithuanian and Australian sports rosters and competitions.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

In 1955 Rama Genys, b. 1918 formed the Lithuanian Women's Welfare Association as an affiliate of the Canberra Lithuanian Community Council. Funds were raised by means of balls, picnics, catering and lotteries and were used to support Lithuanians still living in Germany and the Punskas region.⁶⁴⁴ During its existence of some twenty years, the Association worked in close co-operation with the Country Women's Association of Australia and the Good Neighbour Council, exchanging speakers and small exhibitions.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴² *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 220

⁶⁴³ *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 198

⁶⁴⁴ The Punskas region is populated mainly by Lithuanians but since World War I has been governed by Poland.

⁶⁴⁵ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 198

LITHUANIAN-AUSTRALIAN CLUB

In 1961 moves were made by the Canberra Lithuanian Community Council and other Lithuanian organizations in Canberra to acquire a Lithuanian House.⁶⁴⁶ Because of the small Lithuanian population it was decided that a Lithuanian-Australian Club would be more feasible. Petras Pilka headed a steering committee which acquired suitable land in the suburb of Lyneham. The club was built by voluntary labour in 1963.⁶⁴⁷ In 1983 membership totalled 800 and included many Australians.⁶⁴⁸ Today the club remains an active, profitable enterprise.

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN CANBERRA

Four Lithuanian artists, three of whom were born outside Australia, are currently living in Canberra. All received their education in this country. Painter and writer Kazys Kemežys, by profession a geologist, gained a Science degree from the University of Sydney and went on to complete a doctorate at the Australian National University. Although without formal art training, he has gained success as a painter. Rimas Keraitis, a graduate in Science from the Australian National University, is a self-taught sculptor whose work draws extensively on Lithuanian mythology. Gražina Katauskas gains inspiration for weaving and fibre sculpture from her Lithuanian background. Australian-born Cecilija Kemežys is a graphic artist whose work combines visual and musical artistic interests.

Kazys Kemežys⁶⁴⁹ was born in Klaipėda, Lithuania on 23 April 1937. His father was the general manager of the Rytas (Morning) publishing company and had considerable writing ability.⁶⁵⁰ When the Germans occupied Klaipėda in 1939 the Kemežys family moved to Kaunas and five years later fled to the West. They spent some years in the Seedorf refugee camp in Germany where Kazys attended school. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia and settled in Sydney. After gaining the Leaving Certificate at De La Salle College in 1954, Kemežys enrolled at the University of Sydney to study engineering, but a year

⁶⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁴⁷ Jūris Kovalskis in *Merraštis*, Vol. 2, p. 216

⁶⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁴⁹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 7 Feb. 1988.

⁶⁵⁰ Kazys Kemežys senior published his memoirs and contributed to the Australian Lithuanian press.

later switched to science, graduating with a major in geology in 1959. His first geology contract was in the Fijian gold fields where he spent a year, accompanied by his wife, formerly Michelle Christoff. In his free time he began to draw the landscape and to read Indian philosophy. Following a divorce in 1962, Kemežys settled in Canberra and worked on his doctoral thesis, 'Studies in Fossil Brachipod Morphology' which he completed in 1968. In 1965 he married Mary Falconer by whom he has two daughters and from whom he was divorced in the eighties. He currently works in Canberra as a self-employed geologist and freelance painter.

Although Kemežys has had no formal art training, his interest in art stems from his childhood when his family regularly visited Lithuanian art exhibitions. He believes that 'art should have meaning' and says, 'A painting is not a window or door into another world, but more like a mirror reflecting, without the prejudices and distortions of fashionable beliefs -- a mirror in which not everyone wears the Emperor's clothes.'⁶⁵¹ He is concerned about the beginnings of humanity, about the cosmos and the universe. Some of the symbols he uses are recognisable and recurring, such as the embryo, ovum, sperm; others are personal or purely decorative. His colours possess unvarying meanings: black denotes for him the unknown, the infinite, the absolute; yellow, the blossoming of the highest and noblest; red, life energy, the male principle; blue, passivity, the female principle. Although he says that he paints from sheer anguish, his paintings appear bright and optimistic, and at the same time are sophisticated, symbolic statements requiring interpretation. They are decorative, strictly two-dimensional and executed in flat, unmodulated colour.

From the beginning, Kemežys's paintings have been elaborately executed, requiring carefully planned preliminary sketches. Stylistically, there is some relationship to the work of the French painter, Amedee Ozenfant (1886-1966), founder of the Purist style; as well, there is the decorativeness of Art Nouveau. Following Kemežys's first exhibition, art critic Donald Brook wrote: 'Kemežys paints ... ambitious pictures in a range from abstract to surrealist-figurative. He insists that the "abstract" patterns are in fact figurative, but the interpretations he offers are of the pictures-in-the-fire variety.'⁶⁵²

Matching the complexity of his paintings, Kemežys's surrealist writing has appeared in *Poetry and Prose Broadsheet*, of which he was co-editor. The same trend is evident in many of his painting titles and in his descriptions of his works and seems intended to shock or confuse the viewer. In the 1974 exhibition catalogue notes describing the picture, *Venture into the Foreground* (ill. 454), Kemežys gave the following cryptic explanation:

⁶⁵¹ From catalogue of his exhibition, *No Exit*, Canberra, 13-15 Sept. 1974.

⁶⁵² Donald Brook, *Canberra Times*, 2 Oct. 1964.

Like a strike of switchboard operators, the thought was not important in itself, but it did manage to disrupt severely normal communication within my brain. So I forced the thought into my pineal eye, it then rolled down the ridge and to the tip of my nose where I was able to examine it more objectively. I then pursed my lips and blew it off. It hovered in the foreground like a soap bubble and then burst into nothingness.⁶⁵³

His association with artists Bill Rose and Russell Drysdale and with biology professor Talbot Watermann, an art connoisseur, has influenced some of his biomorphic images, e.g. *Venture into the Foreground*, 1974. This is a seemingly Daedalian picture in which from an ornamental labyrinth emerges a large, black image with a silvery figure attached. Upon closer examination -- and taking Kemežys's colour symbolism into account -- it may be interpreted as the divine beginning of the embryo, encircled by sinuous, twisting spirals from which emerges a winged, spiritual being. The enigmatic background, alive with continuously moving lines most likely referring to sperm and ova, is rendered in subdued colours.

Birth, 1980 (ill. 455) is another decorative rendering on the same theme. The symbols of divinity, life forces presented in a variety of shapes and the blue embryo are interwoven in an announcement of birth. Here, the movement is slower, the shapes larger and fewer but placed with greater assurance than in *Venture into the Foreground*. Other themes, some historical, are also presented in enigmatic style and often combine two aspects. e.g. *The Arrival of Richard Burke*. 1986 (ill. 456). Here the artist frames the view of the explorer's impending arrival with a boomerang decorated with aboriginal ornaments.

In 1964 Kemežys showed his work publicly for the first time. This was in a joint exhibition with Jurgis Janavičius at Garema Hall in Canberra. His first solo exhibition was held in 1974 at the Theatre Centre Gallery in Canberra. He participated in Lithuanian Art Exhibitions in 1976 in Melbourne, in 1984 in Canberra and in 1986 in Sydney. He is an active member of the Lithuanian community in Canberra.

Sculptor **Rimas Keraitis**⁶⁵⁴ was born in 1944 in Bad Hall, Austria, to Kazys and Viktorija Keraitis when his parents, both agricultural science graduates, were fleeing from the Soviets. In 1949 the family migrated to Australia. After completing secondary education at St. Edmund's College in Canberra in 1963, Keraitis enrolled at the Australian National University as a part-time student in geology, geography and history. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in

⁶⁵³ From *No Exit*.

⁶⁵⁴ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 6 Feb. 1988.

1970 and in the following year studied metalwork at Canberra Technical College.

Although Keraitis did not study art at school, his parents encouraged him from an early age to paint and draw. Their home possessed many Lithuanian folk-art carvings, paintings and woven craftwork. Both parents were active in Canberra's Lithuanian community and Rimas was familiar from childhood with Lithuanian myths and legends. His fascination with stones found expression in an interest in geology and mineralogy. Both he and his mother are avid collectors: she of porcelain and ivory artefacts, he of stones, semi-precious stones and minerals.

Keraitis is a self-taught sculptor who 'only occasionally looked into art books.' His work is related to constructivism and the works of David Smith, Julio Gonzalez and Jose de Rivera, although Keraitis's created forms are softer and more lyrical. He aims to combine media with contrasting, complementary characteristics: for instance, the dull medium of iron or steel is enlivened by colourful minerals. His themes are taken from mythology. His welded sculptures are open in structure and although free-standing, most often are rather flat. The dominant elements are linear and fractured, often concentrated into clusters to form images of stars or of the sun. His work is endowed with symbolism and alludes to the cosmos, to stellar constellations and, of course, to 'Mother Sun.' His iron sculpture, *Triumph of the Sun*, 1972 (ill. 457), is constructed in two parts -- horizontal and vertical -- and crowned with the shape of the radiating sun. The horizontal section is encrusted with crystals of emerald and black quartz.

Star Constellation, 1975 (ill. 458), is exceptional in his generally static oeuvre as it exhibits vigorous horizontal movement. In *Daughter of the Sun*, 1973 (ill. 459), Keraitis renders a personal impression of the Morning Star, Aušrinė, from Lithuanian mythology. According to legend, Aušrinė was the daughter of the sun and the moon and the clandestine love of her father. In this metamorphic work the sculptor endeavours to represent the divine and the tragic aspects of the Morning Star, appropriately adorning it with amber beads representing the tears of 'Mother Sun'.

His first solo exhibition which was of welded sculptures embellished with crystals took place in 1971 at the Dickson Library at the Australian National University. In 1972 he gained first prize at the Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Sydney. In 1975 he married librarian Veronica Chlap. They operate a bookshop in Canberra and are bringing up two sons. Keraitis says that his artistic activity is temporarily suspended but that ideas for future sculptures are 'collecting in the head.' Keraitis is actively involved in the Lithuanian community as an artist and scouts leader. Since 1970 he has been a

member of the Canberra Gem Society and has participated in its exhibitions as well as in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Gražina Katauskas⁶⁵⁵ is a sculptor in fibre, a weaver, jewellery maker and a teacher. She was born to teachers Jurgis and Bronė Reisgys on 29 June 1943 in Panevėžys, Lithuania. In 1944 the family fled to the West where they lived for some time in a refugee camp in Germany. In 1949 they migrated to Australia and settled in the Sydney suburb of Bankstown.

Although her parents were manual workers, she attended the private Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College in Epping. Art was not a school subject but artistic pursuits were encouraged and carried on at home, especially wood carving and weaving of traditional Lithuanian sashes. As well, the family regularly visited art galleries.

After leaving school, Gražina Katauskas enrolled at the University of Sydney to study pharmacy. During her university days, she was also active in the Lithuanian Scouts and Lithuanian Students Association, and for two years was editor of *Studentų žodis* (Students' Word), a supplement to the Lithuanian weekly, *Mūsų Pastogė* (Our Haven). In 1967 she married Romas Katauskas, a civil engineer, and they settled in Canberra. Feeling lonely because of the very small Lithuanian community there, she says she began to weave sashes and do tapestry and to learn the principles of macrame work. In 1973 she joined the Spinners and Weavers Association and was taught modern methods by Belinda Ransom.

Caring for her three children did not allow much time for weaving so she turned to macrame and clay-jewellery modelling. In 1978 she became a member of the Canberra Macrame Association and has participated in its annual exhibitions. Katauskas concentrates on large, non-functional macrame work and produces what may be called fibre sculptures. Since 1980 she has belonged to the Macrame Association of Australia and has taken part in its annual shows where she has exhibited works with Lithuanian folk-art motifs. As a result, she was invited to teach weaving and macrame at the Canberra School of Art. Katauskas has also taught Lithuanian sash weaving and traditional egg decoration at various Canberra high schools and at Lithuanian summer scouts camps.

Her woven sashes faithfully exhibit traditional designs and colours and are executed with precise detail, e.g. *Sashes*, 1986 (ill. 460). Katauskas's woven tapestries are influenced by the rigidity and symmetry of Lithuanian folk art but use restrained colours, as in *Tulips*, 1984 (ill. 461). Her macrame wall

⁶⁵⁵ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 6 Feb. 1988.

hangings and free-standing, soft sculptures are bold and abstract in design, and are in muted, earthy colours as in *Waves*, 1985 (ill. 462).

Katauskas has participated regularly since 1979 in both Lithuanian and Australian art exhibitions.

Graphic artist **Cecilija Kemežys**⁶⁵⁶ was born, the elder daughter of geologist Kazys and Mary (*nee* Falconer) Kemežys, in Darwin on 21 September 1965. Soon afterwards, her parents moved to Canberra where Cecilija was educated at Narrabundah College. In 1984 she enrolled at the Canberra School of Art where she studied graphic art for two years, after which she studied flute at the Canberra School of Music. Her work combines visual and musical artistic interests. She produces semi-abstract, fragmented images in sensitive, continuous lines. Colour-washes are applied fluidly, one hue merging with another. In spirit her drawings are reminiscent of the work of Raoul Dufy, Veiriada Silva and William Rose.

Flautist, 1985 (ill. 463), is a freely executed impression of a musician and his music. The images merge to form one entity surrounded by musical notes. Kemežys uses minimal line to convey the musical rapture. In *Rainy Day*, 1985 (ill. 464), she incorporates the sun, trees and three human figurines into one agitated unit, using fine, attenuated lines and thin colour washes. Most of her drawings have a light, lyrical quality which conveys joyfulness and ingenuity. Kemežys participated in Lithuanian Art Exhibitions in 1984 in Canberra and in 1986 in Sydney.

LITHUANIANS IN NEWCASTLE

In 1948 the first Lithuanians arrived in Newcastle. They were all male, either single or married men whose families had had to remain in either Greta (NSW) or Nelson Bay (NSW) migrant reception camps. Some three-quarters of the men were employed at the BHP steelworks on shift rosters which operated seven days per week.⁶⁵⁷ In 1951 there were about 150 Lithuanians in Newcastle;⁶⁵⁸ by 1983 the number was about 200.⁶⁵⁹ The Newcastle community does not have a Lithuanian House as in most other communities; this and the fact that so many men and women are shift-workers, are probably

⁶⁵⁶ Biog/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 7 Feb. 1988.

⁶⁵⁷ Mykolas Seškus in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 243

⁶⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 242

⁶⁵⁹ R. Lapinskas in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 332

the reasons that there have been fewer cultural activities and that community organizations over the years have generally been short-lived.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

It was not until 1953 that a community meeting was held. It was attended by eighty-one Lithuanians and the Newcastle Lithuanian Community Council was formed, with Jonas Deckys⁶⁶⁰ as the first president. Its aim was to foster Lithuanian culture, to organize community activities and to arrange suitable venues for national and religious commemorative celebrations. Because of the small number of active members, the Community Council decided to work closely with other groups sympathetic to Baltic people. Later in 1953, the presidents of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian communities formed the Baltic Nations Committee.

Since that time, annual combined gatherings have commemorated the June 14 Soviet deportations of Baltic people to Siberia and the ceremonies have been attended also by Australian political, church and civic leaders.⁶⁶¹ The Baltic Nations Committee disbanded in 1974 but since then the Community Council has continued to function.⁶⁶² Since 1957 it has been represented on the Good Neighbour Council, the first representatives being Dr. Mykolas Šeškus and Marija Rimgaudas.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arts Group

In 1953, the *Meno grupė* (Arts Group) was initiated by Marija Rimgaudas who instructed and led folk-dance and drama sections. During 1954 and 1955 several performances were presented on local radio 2KO.⁶⁶³

Discussion Club

The *Lietuvių diskusijų klubas* (Lithuanian Discussion Club) was established by Dr. Mykolas Šeškus in 1954. Although it had only about fifteen members, the

⁶⁶⁰ Šeškus, *ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 243

⁶⁶¹ Lapinskas in *Metastis*, Vol. 2, p. 334

⁶⁶² *ibid*

⁶⁶³ *ibid*

Club has had an impact on the whole Lithuanian community in Newcastle by the publication in *Mūsų Pastogė* of its lecture series. Although no records were kept in the early years, it is known that during the past twenty years over 140 lectures have been delivered.⁶⁶⁴ These have ranged over many speakers and topics: Dr. Vytautas Doniela on philosophy, Dr. Algis Ivinskis on psychology; Dr. Mykolas Šeškus on history; Dr. Gerutis Kišonas on medicine and Viktorija Kristensen on literature and music.⁶⁶⁵

Weekend School

A weekend school established in 1954 functioned for only two years.⁶⁶⁶ In 1963 efforts to re-establish the school were unsuccessful.⁶⁶⁷

Musical Groups

In 1955, Stasys Žukas organized a mixed choir with thirty-one singers. It became the centre of Lithuanian cultural activity in Newcastle and performed for both Lithuanian and Australian audiences as well as participating in a number of specific events in Newcastle: in 1962 at the Mattara Festival; in 1963 at the International Music festival; and in 1966 at the Captive Nations Concert.⁶⁶⁸ The choir took part also in Lithuanian Days festivals in various locations and entertained other Lithuanian communities in NSW until its disbandment in 1978 when, it is reported, the singers had 'become tired, aged or died.'⁶⁶⁹

Art Lovers Group

In 1958, Juozas Česnaitis formed the *Meno mėgėjų grupė* (Art Lovers Group) which, during its existence over several years, staged five theatrical performances.

Lithuanian Library

In 1959, Petras Bruzga, at that time president of the Newcastle Lithuanian Community Council, and Dr. Mykolas Šeškus founded a Lithuanian Library.

⁶⁶⁴ Viktorija Kristensen in *40 metų*, p. 125

⁶⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶⁶ Mykolas Šeškus in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 244

⁶⁶⁷ Stasys Žukas in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 338

⁶⁶⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁶⁹ *ibid*

Books were donated by local people and by libraries in larger Lithuanian centres. The collection has been housed at a number of private locations and since 1978 the chief librarian has been Viktorija Kristensen. There are at present (1990 figures) some eight hundred volumes in the collection as well as a range of local and American periodicals to which the library subscribes.⁶⁷⁰

Folk-dance Group

In 1973, Zina Zakarauskas organized the *Vaiva*⁶⁷¹ folk-dance group which remained together for three years.⁶⁷² In 1977, she formed a singing trio with guitar accompanist and named it Trio Plus One. Zakarauskas is conductor as well as singer.⁶⁷³

Lithuanian Press

In 1956 Petras Bruzga and Vaclovas Liūga published *Lietuvių biuletenis* (The Lithuanian Bulletin) under the auspices of the Newcastle Lithuanian Community Council and the Church Committee.⁶⁷⁴ It appeared irregularly and contained information about local events as well as Lithuanian stories and poetry. There were twenty-five issues during its eleven-year period of publication.⁶⁷⁵

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Unlike young people in most other Lithuanian communities, the youth in Newcastle have had neither a basketball team nor a Scouts group. For several years from 1960, a Catholic youth organization Ateitininkai (People of the Future), formed by Julius Zakarauskas and initially comprising fifteen members, was active.⁶⁷⁶ The young people attended weekly Mass, collected donations for the Lithuanian church in Adelaide and were given religious instruction by Fr. Stanislovas Gaidelis and visiting priests.⁶⁷⁷ In 1971,

⁶⁷⁰ Viktorija Kristensen in *40 metų*, p. 126

⁶⁷¹ *Vaiva* is the Lithuanian goddess of the rainbow.

⁶⁷² Zina Zakarauskas in *Metrašius*, Vol. 2, p. 339

⁶⁷³ *ibid*

⁶⁷⁴ Šeškus in *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 245

⁶⁷⁵ Žukauskas, *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 336

⁶⁷⁶ Šeškus in *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 245

⁶⁷⁷ *ibid*

Alfonas Šernas initiated Jaunimo komitetas (The Youth Committee) which organized dance evenings, picnics and lotteries but lasted for only four years.⁶⁷⁸

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN NEWCASTLE

Newcastle has been home to three artists, all women: Aldona Zakarauskas, Veronika Kristensen and Akvila Zavišaitė. Both Zakarauskas and Kristensen were raised in Newcastle and took part in community activities while growing up. Zavišaitė, however, arrived only in 1983 from Soviet Lithuania and during the eight years up to her death in 1991 did not participate in general Lithuanian community activities. She was, however, always keen to be represented at Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Painter and art lecturer Aldona Zakarauskas (O'Brien)⁶⁷⁹ was born in Kaunas on 8 December 1943, the third child of Balys and Ona (*nee* Utraitė) Zakarauskas. In 1944 the parents fled with their four children to West Germany. In 1949 they migrated to Australia and settled in Newcastle where Balys Zakarauskas completed his work contract as an industrial worker at the BHP steelworks. He later purchased a fruit orchard.

After leaving Boolaroo Primary School, Aldona attended the Newcastle Girls High School until 1958. Her best subjects were Art, English and Geography. Art teachers Maggie Gilchrist and Margaret Hughes fostered her artistic talent especially, she says, because she was a migrant child. On completion of secondary study, Aldona entered the National Art School in Newcastle, graduating in 1962. She married Phillip O'Brien, an economics student, in the same year and their son Mark was born in 1963.

From 1966 to 1970 Zakarauskas taught art at a number of high schools in Sydney and at the National Art School, Newcastle. During this time she participated in several group exhibitions and held her first solo showing at the Anne Von Bertouch Galleries in Newcastle. In 1971 the family went to London where Zakarauskas was one of only five successful students selected from two thousand applicants by the Royal College of Art. Her M.A. thesis, 'Design Symbols of the Art Deco Period' was completed in 1974. While overseas, she travelled extensively through Europe and the United Kingdom visiting art galleries and museums.

On returning to Australia in 1975 she was appointed senior lecturer in the School of Visual and Performing Arts at the Newcastle College of Advanced

⁶⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁷⁹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 13 Feb. 1988.

Education (Now part of the University of Newcastle). During college vacations she has travelled a number of times to art centres in Europe and Asia. After she and her husband were divorced in 1981 she went to New York, but says that because of her unhappiness she did not make full use of what ^{was on offer in New York.} It was not until later study trips to the USA that she developed a liking for American experimental and dynamic art and for what she saw as the optimistic American way of life. She teaches at the University of Newcastle under her married name; paints under her maiden name.

Zakarauskas endeavours through art to satirise the futility of contemporary society. Her work is painted collage, influenced by cubism and Dada, but mainly by Max Ernst, b. 1891 and Jean Dubuffet, b. 1901. It is based on figurative arrangement with symbolic connotations and references to history, religion and Zakarauskas's own childhood experiences. Without malice or rancour, but neither light heartedly nor trivially, she enjoys, she says, camouflaging the collages with paint, teasing the viewer about her technique. She rejects conventional notions of beauty and traditional perspective and composition. Her art, more conceptual than perceptual, uses stereotypes to create something new and unexpected but always retaining an intentional ambiguity in technique as well as in meaning. She states:

I use other people's images -- stereotypes of advertisements -- in order to create my own visual language ... My work is concerned with the synthesis of oil paint, collage and various media. I aim to maintain a balance between the use of a printed image and recognisable images from glossy magazines like *Vogue* and the actual texture of papers or objects, veiling them with paint to create a mystery between what is collage and what is paint.⁶⁸⁰

Her work has undergone both compositional and thematic changes since the sixties when she was concerned mainly with impressions of events, often homely, generally without comment. Compositions of this period are often tight with dark, often gloomy, colours, e.g. *Childhood Dreams*, 1966 (ill. 465). This is a claustrophobic arrangement, drawing on the artist's childhood experiences and the frightening realms of the mind. The hallucinatory quality is emphasised by the crowding of the characters and their unification within the space by the use of grey-blue monochrome. Only two or three objects are taken from real life; the rest of the picture consists of indefinable zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images. From her earliest paintings there is often a suggestion of continuity and timelessness, e.g. *Childhood Memories of the National Dance*, 1969 (ill. 466). Here, the swirling skirts, sashes and plaits of the dancers create a strong sense of vigorous movement. The costumes, rather than

⁶⁸⁰ From catalogue, *Diversities: Artists from the Hunter Region*, 1986.

being faithful ethnographic reproductions, give a generalised, colourful impression.

During the seventies sociological, psychological, religious and cultural comment began to be included in her work. Compositions of this time show more space, circular and semi-circular grouping of subjects and lighter and brighter colours. One example is *City Ladies Looking Down on Country Ladies*, 1970 (ill. 467). Here, the subject matter is executed within a tondo superimposed on a colourful, geometrically patterned square which in turn is framed by a rectangle which is a simpler, darker geometric motif. The tondo is divided in two: the lower half is filled with vivacious female dancers dressed in folk costumes and waving happily; the upper section has a group of more subdued women dressed in plainer gowns. The picture may be interpreted merely as the title suggests; however, medieval framing, the division into two parts -- terrestrial and celestial -- and the distinction of colours, reinforce the notion of angels looking down on worldly folk. Thus it can be seen that Zakarauskas's wit is expressed and accessible on several levels.

Many paintings of this same period tend to satirise religious rites and images, e.g. *For the Immaculate Conception and Coronation of the Virgin*, both 1971, and *Ladies to the Ceremonial Holy Water*, 1970 (ill. 468). The last can be read either as a satirical statement on the advertising industry and fashion or as a reference to the way in which modern swimming carnivals can be seen to equate with baptismal ceremonies of earlier times. The painting *King's Road Lady Parade*, 1973, also has strong religious connotations. Ladies parading in a fashion show are seen as analogous to a procession of saints, the central section of the octagonal picture representing the dome of a Byzantine cathedral. Much of Zakarauskas's artistic comment is purely social, e.g. *Ladies' Choir near the Barren Tree*, 1974 (ill. 469). Here she implies an analogy between a barren tree and the activities of the women.

Her work of the eighties has freer composition, fewer objects within each painting and lighter colours, e.g. *Pyramid, Palms and High Heels*, 1980 (ill. 470). Here, the immovable and permanent are confronted by the transient and momentary. This is highlighted in the juxtaposition of the stability and sobriety of the pyramid and the frantic rush of the tourists. Although the technique is reminiscent of Miro and of post-cubist collage, Zakarauskas imbues her work with an intensity of her own.

Veronika Sidsel Lange Kristensen,⁶⁸¹ painter, draftsman and art teacher, was born, the second of three children, on 28 October 1951 at Verde in

⁶⁸¹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 25 Feb. 1988.

Denmark to a Lithuanian mother and a Danish father. In 1954 the family arrived in Australia. Her mother Viktorija, a librarian and an amateur painter, writer and music lover, encouraged the creative development of her children and their home contained many art books and recordings of classical music. She was involved from an early age in folk-dancing, singing and poetry-reading groups.

Kristensen was brought up in the Lithuanian Catholic tradition. She completed her primary education at St. Columban's Catholic School in Newcastle in 1963 and went on to Newcastle Girls High School, at that time still a selective school. She did well academically, particularly in Art, English and Ancient History. In 1969 she began studies at the National Art School in Newcastle where, in 1974, she gained a Diploma of Fine Arts and was also awarded the A. Dattilo-Rubbo prize for best overall performance. During 1975 and 1976 she toured central Europe and Scandinavia where she was very impressed by the works of Renaissance and Impressionist masters.

After her return to Australia, Kristensen taught drawing in 1977 and 1978 at the Newcastle College of Advanced Education. In 1979 she moved to Sydney and immersed herself for some time in a Bohemian lifestyle, living on government assistance which she supplemented by performing as a dancer in nightclubs. This brought her into contact with many unusual people whom she later used as subjects for her drawings.

After about a year she resumed a more conventional lifestyle and until 1986 was Art Director at the View Production Company where she designed and illustrated books, magazines and posters and had overall responsibility for artistic production. During this time she began further study at evening classes at the City Art Institute in Sydney and gained a Graduate Diploma in Professional Art Studies in 1984.

In 1985 Kristensen was appointed to a part-time teaching position in the Art and Graphic Design departments at the Liverpool College of Technical and Further Education, at the same time continuing her work as an art director. In 1986 she decided to work only as a part-time teacher of graphic design and art history at the Liverpool College.

Kristensen's art is representational and figurative and has some surrealistic hints. She believes that through the human figure the artist can solve artistic problems and express ideas and philosophies. She prefers line to colour; her pastel drawings of people are sparsely coloured, yet imbued with warmth and sincerity, showing her interest in what she terms 'the human condition'. She uses unconventional, Bohemian-type people as subjects for her paintings. She says, 'Sometimes people are shocked by my art but only because I am honest and hide nothing ... Art should elevate or transform any aspect of life.

Art should reflect the higher and finer qualities of human existence, even if it is done seemingly through less elevated or less exalted subject matter.'

She admires the paintings of Bosch for their bizarre images, of Schiele for his interest in sex and religion, of Toulouse-Lautrec and Daumier for their social comment. She also admires and is strongly influenced by her teacher Aldona Zakarauskas. In the seventies, some of Kristensen's work was influenced by Bosch and the modern surrealists. She became preoccupied with the notion of the cycle of life and used bizarre symbols of life and death. Kristensen's Catholic educational background found expression in some of her early work: *Pregnant Madonna*, 1972 (ill. 471), for example, is her critical interpretation of religious teaching. In other paintings she portrays nuns, her former teachers, as overpowering frightening witches. She later made portrait drawings aiming at psychological insight, as in her 1978 *Portrait of William Coombes*,⁶⁸² for which she received the Warringah Art Prize. Using disciplined, crisp lines and restricted palette in tones of brown, she stresses in this work the spartan nature of flat drawing, and aspires to generalise and universalise the image of the subject.

In the eighties she emphasised more the sensual quality of the individual. Her approach to her subject became much more personal. e.g. *Worried Ballerina*, 1982 (ill. 472). The work is reminiscent of Degas but she adds a feeling of mundane anxiety to the glamour of the dance.

Surrealist elements are evident in Kristensen's pencil drawing. *Sensuality*, 1984 (ill. 473). Here, the artist says she attempted to depict the human condition when sensuality overrides all other feelings: the subject's fashionable gloves change to beast-like hands, the eyes become a dark mask and the mouth adopts an expression of vulgarity. In many of her pastel drawings surrealist elements are minimal, as in *Lover*, 1985 (ill. 474). In this realistically rendered pastel drawing only the merging of the sleeping torso with the bedding hints at surrealism.

Her attention was caught during the eighties by the colourful and bizarre appearance of male transvestites. Her many, sympathetic and slightly satirical pastel drawings of them were shown in her second solo exhibition at the Sydney Gallery in 1983. Veronika Kristensen's work opens a window on some of the more unconventional groups within society and aims to broaden understanding of other lifestyles.

⁶⁸² Coombes was a singer and teacher at Newcastle Conservatorium of Music.

Painter **Akvila Zavišaitė** (1962-1991)⁶⁸³ was born in Vilnius on 28 November 1962 to architect Algimantas and journalist Rita (*nee* Baltušytė) Zaviša. Although her parents divorced early in her childhood, she was brought up as a member of the privileged class in Lithuania as her grandfather, Juozas Baltušis (1909-1991) a celebrated writer and hard-line Communist, was a member of the Soviet Lithuanian Parliament from 1947.⁶⁸⁴

After completing high school study in 1981, Zavišaite enrolled at the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute to study English, a decision probably motivated by the fact that in 1979 her mother had been given permission by the Soviets to visit Australia. In Sydney, her mother had married an Australian, Miles Ormsby, and was now living in Australia. Akvila joined her mother in 1983 and enrolled at the Newcastle College of Advanced Education to study art. She graduated with a major in painting in 1987 and soon afterwards visited the USA. In 1989 she re-visited Lithuania where she married Kipras Šimulynas. The couple returned to Australia but separated quite soon afterwards. In 1991, after a long illness, Akvila Zavišaitė died in Sydney.

Despite the very strong ideological environment in which she was raised, Zavišaitė was completely indifferent to politics and ideologies and, since early childhood, was fascinated by what she perceived as the carefree lifestyle of Western countries. During their brief encounters, she was encouraged by her father to draw and paint. She recalled: 'I would go with my pad and watercolours and sit on the shore (drawing landscapes) ... I was even more interested in sneaking into bars with my father and watching the people drinking and laughing with each other and with the charming barmaids.'⁶⁸⁵

The same bar-room life attracted her in Australia. While a student, she became a dancer in hotels and night-clubs. These experiences are recorded in her paintings of night-club scenes. She admired the paintings of Toulouse-Lautrec,⁶⁸⁶ possibly because he used similar themes, but in contrast to the panoramic views and the coldness of the French artist and of German expressionists Kirchner and Nolde, Zavišaitė depicts cosy and humanistic night-life scenes in which the girls, young and shapely, amuse themselves by playing cards and sipping wine as they wait to entertain. Zavišaitė said: 'Through the female figure I express my feelings and emotions. I'd like visually to touch the sensuality and sexuality.'⁶⁸⁷

A representational, figurative painter, she worked mostly in pastel, sometimes in chalk and oil. Her idiom of the glamorous female body is

⁶⁸³ Biographical details obtained from letters and photographs sent by her mother Rita Ormsby and from telephone conversation with Ormsby 10 Jan. 1992.

⁶⁸⁴ *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. Vol. 36, p. 86

⁶⁸⁵ Algimantas Kęrys, 'The Art of Akvila Zavišaitė' in *Lituanus*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Summer 1991, p. 39

⁶⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁸⁷ In *Graduate Diploma in Art, Programme for Assessment*, 1987.

basically the standard model seen in glossy magazines but with longer, greatly exaggerated limbs. A solitary figure is usually positioned centrally in her paintings. Dark, flat colours are thinly applied. Many of Zavišaitė's paintings are distorted self-portraits, e.g. *Red Dress*, 1987 (ill. 475), which captures a thoughtful moment. The artist was daring in subject matter as well as in composition, e.g. in *In the Change Room*, 1987 (ill. 476), she changed the conventional format of the quadrangle by reducing the upper width. She seemed to use images of toys metaphorically to comment on a male audience, e.g. *Nocturnal Cup of Tea*, 1988 (ill. 477). She experiments also with abstraction, as in *Smack*, 1987 (ill. 478), a visual exploration of the effects of hard drugs.

Although Zavišaitė was preoccupied with her own activities and did not mix with members of the Lithuanian community, her work was exhibited at two Lithuanian art exhibitions: in Canberra in 1984 and in Adelaide in 1988.

LITHUANIANS IN TASMANIA

The size of the Tasmanian Lithuanian community has decreased since the early post-war period. After serving two-year work contracts in Tasmania, many single males left to live in mainland states; a number of Lithuanians with higher educational qualifications also moved from Tasmania, generally to Melbourne and Sydney. Estimates suggest that in 1950 there were some 300 Lithuanians in Tasmania,⁶⁸⁸ around 200 living in Hobart, mainly in the suburbs of Glenorchy and Springfield, and about one hundred in areas in other parts of the state. About 90% of those who remained in Tasmania married outside their nationality so that by the 1980s there were only about ten families in Hobart where Lithuanian was spoken in the home.⁶⁸⁹ Organized community activity began when two-year work contracts, usually at the Electrolytic Zinc Works at Risdon, the Mt. Lyell mines at Queenstown, the forests near Maydena, the aluminium works at Bell Bay, the Railton cement works and at various hydro-electric schemes, were completed.

⁶⁸⁸ Aleksandras Kantvilas in *Metraštinis*, Vol. 3, p. 206

⁶⁸⁹ *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 247

Hobart Lithuanian Community Council

In 1950, Lithuanians living in Hobart formed the Hobart Lithuanian Community and elected a Council with Jonas Motiejūnas as the first president. Because of small numbers, Hobart has not acquired its own Lithuanian House and for many years hired various venues for meetings and commemorative events. In the 1970s, Bonifacas Šikšnius converted a large garage at his Springfield home into an area suitable for community activities and, since then, most gatherings have been held there. In 1954, Aleksandras Kantvilas⁶⁹⁰ became president of the council and he urged the community to 'muster every effort to make national and religious commemorations meaningful'.⁶⁹¹ As well as maintaining celebrations for National Day, Independence Day and Mothers' Day, Kantvilas arranged lectures on noted Lithuanian writers and poets and invited visiting speakers including Olegas Truchanas⁶⁹² who told of his photographic expeditions on the West Coast. Kantvilas also made contact with other Baltic communities and the Good Neighbour Council. A number of Baltic folk-art exhibitions and cultural performances were held. On-going fellowship with Estonians and Latvians is expressed in the annual combined commemoration of the massive Soviet deportations, on 14 June 1941, of Baltic peoples to Siberia.

Launceston Lithuanian Community Council

In 1951, Stasys Virbickas was elected as the first president of the newly formed Launceston Lithuanian Community Council.⁶⁹³ At that time there were sixty-one members, but membership decreased as Lithuanians left Launceston to work in other parts of Australia. Records show that by 1961 members had dropped to about twenty-five and in 1973 the association disbanded.⁶⁹⁴ From 1953 to 1973, former music teacher Jonas Krutulis was Council president.

⁶⁹⁰ See pp. 337-338

⁶⁹¹ *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 206

⁶⁹² See pp. 329-335

⁶⁹³ *Metrašius*, Vol. 1, p. 207

⁶⁹⁴ From a letter dated 4 Sept. 1992 by Jonas Krutulis to the author.

Following Prime Minister Whitlam's *de jure* recognition in 1974 of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States, Lithuanians in Tasmania, as in other parts of the West, showed their grave anxiety: 'Like fire, great waves of concern swept Australia overnight ... Life burst into activity as never in the last twenty-five years.'⁶⁹⁵ On the initiative of Aleksandras Kantvilas and fellow Lithuanian Algimantas Taškūnas, and in conjunction with Estonians and Latvians, the **HELLP** (Help Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples) Association was formed. Its initial membership was about 500, mainly Australians, and the aim was to publish a regular bulletin, *Baltic News*. Its editor was Algimantas Taškūnas during its sixteen years' existence and the bulletin provided the Australian press, parliamentarians, cultural and religious leaders and the general public with reliable information on the situation in the Baltic states. *Baltic News* was funded by donations and by the end of the seventies had a print-run of 9000. *Baltic News* was published regularly until the Baltic states regained their independence in 1990.⁶⁹⁶

Also motivated by the 'Whitlam events' was the politically motivated charity organization, Friends of the Prisoners, which commenced in 1975. Its purpose was regular written communication with political prisoners, Soviet leaders and concentration camp administrators in the Soviet Union. The majority of its members were Australians and the first president was Gregory Jordan.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Hobart Weekend School

In 1953, the Hobart Lithuanian Community Council established a Lithuanian Weekend School, held at first at St. Theresa's Catholic Church Hall in Moonah and later transferred to a private home at Springfield. Initial enrolment was fifteen. A varied curriculum included play productions by Nina Kantvilas, b. 1921, as well as preparations and celebrations for Mothers' Day and Christmas. The school existed for about fifteen years by which time interest in learning Lithuanian had waned, largely because of mixed marriages and competing interests. In the eighties, the school re-opened with professional teacher Regina Krutulytė-Share, b. 1945, as its head.

⁶⁹⁵ Kantvilas in *40 metų*, 1990, p. 85

⁶⁹⁶ Information re *Baltic News* given by Algimantas Taškūnas, Apr. 1991.

Hobart Musical Activities

A male quartet which entertained both Lithuanians and Australians was formed in Hobart in 1953 and existed for several years.⁶⁹⁷

Musical Activities in Launceston

During his time as president of the Launceston Lithuanian Community Council, Jonas Krutulis trained a Lithuanian male quartet which performed at national and religious observances. Between 1956 and 1980, Krutulis was conductor of the Launceston Male Choir, the members of which were all Australian. This choir added a number of Lithuanian folk-songs to its repertoire. Krutulis was also the conductor of the Launceston Crescent Women's Choir which on special occasions combined with the male choir to perform as a mixed ensemble.

Folk-dance Groups

In 1974, prompted by a reaction to Australia's *de jure* recognition of Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, some young Lithuanians in Hobart formed a folk-dance group which they called *Vėnas*.⁶⁹⁸ It comprised mainly Australians under the leadership of Lithuanians Aldona Ziginskaitė-Nunez, Regina Krutulytė-Share and Ona Mikelaitytė. The group performed locally and several times at interstate Lithuanian Days festivals.

Cultural Activities at Railton

In September, 1949, the fifteen Lithuanian men working in Railton celebrated Lithuanian Day by organizing a Lithuanian folk-art exhibition, the first ever held in Tasmania, and by performing national songs and dances.⁶⁹⁹ Invited guests included local clergy and Mr. Davies-Graham, the manager of the Railton Cement Works where the Lithuanians were employed. Young local Tasmanian women, trained by the Lithuanians, partnered the men in folk dancing and the small male choir was trained and conducted by Vaclovas Kalytis. The programme also included a talk on Lithuanian history by Napoleonas Butkūnas. The male choir was invited to sing at several Catholic churches in the district.

⁶⁹⁷ Aleksandras Kantvilas in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 206

⁶⁹⁸ The group was named after a river in western Lithuania.

⁶⁹⁹ The exhibition was arranged by Ananas Viknius.

The official Catholic newspaper published a complimentary report on the men's cultural abilities and activities.⁷⁰⁰

In an unusual move, motivated largely by his recognition of their cultural backgrounds, Mr. Davies-Graham recommended that several of the Lithuanians should be allowed to complete their work contracts in situations that would allow them to utilise their professional qualifications. As a result, one was appointed as an analytic chemist, another transferred as an agriculturist, and others to veterinary positions.⁷⁰¹

Radio

Jonas Krutulis has, for a number of years, broadcast regularly to Lithuanians in Launceston. Until 1986, he presented Lithuanian music and gave local news and information on Radio 7LA; since that time he is heard frequently on FM Radio 7LTM.

Lithuanian Studies Society

In 1987, Algimantas Taškūnas initiated the formation of the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania.⁷⁰² Its membership is about twenty, and its aim is to encourage, support and promote Lithuanian culture in the sciences, education and art and in various other forms. The society invites academics to deliver lunch-time lectures on Lithuanian topics. During 1989 and 1990, a time of political upheaval in the Baltic States, emphasis was given to this particular theme and the lectures were later published as *Lithuanian Papers*. At other times, the meetings have focused on the screening of video films, workshops demonstrating traditional Easter-egg decoration and so on. Occasionally the society arranges Vakaronė, Lithuanian Evenings. Currently (1992), there are four students at the University of Tasmania working on Lithuanian topics towards higher degrees.

⁷⁰⁰ *Standard*, 16 Dec. 1949

⁷⁰¹ Napoleonas Butkūnas in *Metraščių*, Vol. 1, p. 248

⁷⁰² In 1991 Algimantas Taškūnas was awarded the Order of Australia medal, General Division, for service to tertiary education administration and to the Baltic communities in Tasmania.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

In 1957 Aleksas Jakštas established the Lithuanian sports club, Perkūnas (Thunder), basketball being the major sport.⁷⁰³ Later, tennis and table tennis teams were included. The club was supplemented by Australian players and teams participated in Lithuanian sports festivals in mainland states. By 1990, Perkūnas consisted largely of Australian players but has retained its Lithuanian name as well as several Lithuanian administrators.

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN TASMANIA

Although Lithuanians in Tasmania are not numerous and are isolated from the main Lithuanian centres in a geographical as well as a social sense, their cultural performances are noteworthy. Hobart has given Australia an outstanding art photographer -- Olegas Truchanas -- a promising sculptor Linas Vaičiulevičius and a folk-art carver, Aleksandras Kantvilas. Launceston has produced one art photographer, Mark Bartkevičius.

Art photographer Olegas Truchanas (1923-1972)⁷⁰⁴ is widely remembered for his outstanding contribution to the growth of public awareness and appreciation of Tasmania's wilderness areas. His many interests and pursuits included art photography, exploration, bush-walking, mountain-climbing and canoeing. Through his lectures and writings he gained the high regard of many people. He was involved in many associations including photographic societies, walking clubs, the Search and Rescue division of the Police Force and the National Fitness Council's youth programmes as well as skiing and yachting clubs. He was a committee member of both the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and the Australian Conservation Foundation. A testimonial from the latter reads:

Mr. Truchanas gave unstintingly of his private time, writing reports and articles, preparing photographs, interviewing Ministers and so on, but his greatest contribution was his public illustrated lectures which were seen by thousands in different parts of Tasmania and on the mainland. In these lectures, beautifully illustrated by his own photographs, he was able to draw on a unique experience of the western Tasmanian wilderness gained on his many long bushwalking and canoeing trips. He was the first man to canoe most of the western rivers and for his exploits became a legend in his time.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰³ Kantvilas in *Metraštis*. Vol. 1, p. 207

⁷⁰⁴ Biographical details recorded in interviews and conversations with the artist's widow, Mela Truchanas, and his sister, Nina Kantvilas 6 Aug. 1987 and on several subsequent occasions.

⁷⁰⁵ Cited in Max Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*. Olegas Truchanas Publication Committee, Hobart, 1975.

Truchanas, the second child of Edmundas and Tatjana Truchanas, both public servants, was born on 23 September 1923 in Šiauliai, Lithuania, at that time a town of some 33,000 people. His sister, Nina Kantvilas, recalls that their grandmother⁷⁰⁶ strongly influenced the children's developing attitudes to life and to the world in general. Her telling of stories, proverbs and traditional beliefs was instrumental in teaching them to respect all living things, and they grew to accept that flowers and trees feel and suffer just as humans do. Both children received private tuition in German and Russian.

During his high school years, Truchanas excelled at sport, especially the recently introduced sport of yachting. He was selected to represent Lithuania at the 1940 Olympic Games which did not eventuate because of World War II. He also gained a reputation among his peers for his daring swimming, diving and running exploits which were sometimes so reckless that they led to bodily injury.⁷⁰⁷ At one time during the Russian occupation of Lithuania his adventurous nature caused him to search for a secret tunnel which, legend has it, runs from below a church and under Lake Rekyva to the opposite shore. Truchanas and a group of friends set out to explore what they hoped would be an ideal place for underground activities but, in the darkness, stumbled over rubble causing them to be heard from above. The Red Army was called to investigate, and three days of interrogation followed before the youths were released.⁷⁰⁸

In 1943, Truchanas completed studies at Šiauliai Boys High School. By this time the Germans had closed all tertiary institutions in Lithuania. Anxious to avoid conscription to an SS battalion or deportation to Germany, Truchanas took a job as a night-shift worker at the Gebiets-Kommissariat (District Commissariat) where he had access to printing facilities. He immediately began to disseminate anti-Nazi proclamations. With the Russian advance in 1944, he enlisted in the Vietinė rinktinė (Lithuanian Defence Forces) in order to defend his homeland. In the ensuing German-Russian confrontation, Truchanas was among a group which became separated from the main unit and eventually arrived, the sole survivor, in Germany.⁷⁰⁹ By Christmas, 1945, he was able to join other family members who had fled Lithuania as refugees. In 1946, he enrolled at the UNRRA University in Munich to study law. The faculty head was Professor Popovic, a Yugoslav political refugee who urged his students to pursue international law so that they could eventually contest the rights of oppressed nations.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁶ A highly educated woman, the wife of a physician.

⁷⁰⁷ In a letter, dated 9 Aug. 1987, to the author, Bronius Stašionis describes how, for the equivalent of a fifty-cent wager, Truchanas jumped from a bridge, miscalculated the depth of the water and suffered injury.

⁷⁰⁸ From a letter dated 20 July 1972 from Aleksandras Gabas to Nina Kantvilas.

⁷⁰⁹ From a letter dated 6 Dec. 1972 from Aleksandras Gabas to Nina Kantvilas.

⁷¹⁰ From letter dated 9 Aug. 1987 from Bronius Stašionis to the author.

When in 1947 the UNRRA University closed because of Soviet diplomatic pressure, Truchanas moved to a displaced persons camp at Garmish-Partenkirchen where he came into contact with several Bavarian photographers whose approach to photography he learned. Although he admired the architecture and sculptural works of his surroundings, his interests lay primarily in photographing the natural environment, especially in its pristine and primeval states.⁷¹¹

In 1948 Truchanas migrated to Australia, on the voyage taking part in a male vocal quartet and a folk-art exhibition where he displayed a hand-crafted model of a sailboat.⁷¹² On arrival at Bonegilla (Vic.) migrant reception camp, he took part in organizing a folk-art exhibition.⁷¹³

Truchanas carried out his two-year work contract as a labourer at the Electrolytic Zinc Works at Risdon, near Hobart, and later held a clerical position with the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission. At weekends he took his camera and rucksack and began to explore his surroundings. Initially, his photography and his mood were 'very pessimistic'. Mr. C.G. Billing, for many years president of the Tasmania Photographic Society, has said of Truchanas: 'When he arrived, he showed ... frustration in many ways.'⁷¹⁴ Truchanas's photographs of that time, some of them prize-winners, mirror his feelings of despondency and loneliness: his subjects were frequently dead and dying trees and isolated valleys. As well, he made a number of solemn portraits.

His weekend excursions took him further into remote wilderness areas. After reading newspaper reports that a group of climbers had reached the previously unscaled summit of Federation Peak, Truchanas resolved to climb the mountain by himself. In 1952, Truchanas was successful in his lone attempt to climb Federation Peak. The feat was performed in twenty-eight days during which time he made a series of photographs, later used to illustrate his public lectures in Hobart and Launceston.⁷¹⁵ Artist Max Angus writes:

The public response to his audio-visual presentations ... was dramatic. On eight consecutive occasions there was standing room only. So compelling were these shows, the doors of the hall had to be closed half an hour before each presentation began. Hundreds were turned away on each occasion. People came not only to see the superb quality of his pictures, but also to hear the explorer. His rich voice, his warmth, [his] dry humour and lucid speeches will be long remembered.⁷¹⁶

In 1956, Truchanas married a member of the Launceston Walking Club, Melva Stocks, who encouraged him in his efforts to persuade authorities that

⁷¹¹ *ibid*

⁷¹² From Skurulis letter, 6 Dec. 1972 to Nina Kantilas.

⁷¹³ *ibid*

⁷¹⁴ From telephone conversation with author, 3 Nov. 1987.

⁷¹⁵ Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*, p. 31

⁷¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 38

Tasmania's natural heritage should be preserved. It is believed that Truchanas was the first (1957-8) to canoe and document the entire Serpentine-Gordon river system.⁷¹⁷ Besides making a photographic record of his journey and of the great natural beauty of the region, he documented a wealth of data about the river system and the flora, fauna and geology of the area. Although the area had previously been visited by aborigines and white prospectors and loggers, no comprehensive pictorial and few other records had been made.⁷¹⁸ During one of his public lectures, Truchanas said: 'It is this gap that I am trying to fill.'⁷¹⁹

In 1963, when the Hydro-Electric Commission announced plans to flood Lake Pedder and to construct another hydro-electric station, Truchanas strongly opposed the project. He joined with others who showed their opposition to the proposal by organizing petitions, declarations and media releases and by presenting public illustrated lectures. Despite their efforts, Lake Pedder was flooded.

In 1967, bushfires in southern Tasmania destroyed many homes, including that of Truchanas. He considered the 'real loss' to be his photographic records of the past fifteen years.⁷²⁰ He was determined to repeat his expeditions and to make new photographs. In 1968, Truchanas helped to save the Huon Pine forest on the Denison River. Commercial interests were anxious to fell the timber.⁷²¹ Dramatic and lengthy arguments ensued between the Minister for Forests and the Forestry Commissioner on the one hand, and Truchanas and others backed by the Scenery Preservation Board and the Australian Conservation Foundation on the other. The final outcome was that the forest was declared a scenic reserve.⁷²²

In December 1971, Truchanas was offered the position of Senior Tutor in the School of Education and General Studies at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education. Before taking up the position, Truchanas planned to use the summer vacation to do further exploration of the Gordon River area, especially as this would provide the opportunity to replace the photographic records he had lost in the 1967 fires. On 6 January 1972 he set out to travel along the Gordon River by canoe. Max Angus describes what then occurred:

Truchanas had paddled across the river in his kayak to take a photograph of a native plant. The river at this point was deep ... and a waterfall fell

⁷¹⁷ *ibid*

⁷¹⁸ R. Flanagan, 'A Terrible Beauty', B. A. honours thesis, University of Tasmania, 1982, p. 29.

⁷¹⁹ From tape-recording of lecture, Hobart 1971.

⁷²⁰ Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*, p. 35

⁷²¹ Huon Pine: *Podocarpaceae Lagarostrobos franklinii*. Tasmanian endemic conifer. Grows up to 30m but near rivers, swamps and lakes in temperate rain forests in south and west Tasmania, can attain a height of 50m. Straight trunk, drooping feathery branches. Lives more than one thousand years. Rot-proof, hence its suitability for boat building.

⁷²² *National Parks of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania*, Reader's Digest Services, Surry Hills, 1987, p. 150

away from its downstream end ... He had returned to the side of the river where all his gear had been stacked ... He stepped ashore, and the unladen kayak overturned in a little turbulence. Standing on a rock near the waterfall, he hauled on his canoe rope to pull the craft in ... He slipped on the water-worn rock ... into the river ... and disappeared.⁷²³

Efforts to rescue him were unsuccessful and it was not until three days later that his body was found, entangled in a sunken tree. His death brought tributes from all walks of life. To honour his memory the Huon Pine reserve on the Denison River is now called the Truchanas Huon Pine Reserve; a nearby mountain peak in the Prince of Wales Range is now known as Olegas Bluff. Friends in Western Australia who had admired his exploits in South-West Tasmania gave the name Mount Truchanas to a peak in that state. Perhaps the most fitting tribute of all was the publication of *the world of Olegas Truchanas*, written by his friend, Tasmanian artist Max Angus, who sums up his feelings thus: 'He had perished in the river he sought to save. Classical mythology affords no stronger example of the drama of the incorruptible man who passes into legend.'⁷²⁴ The book's popular and lasting appeal is evidenced by the eight editions so far published.

Truchanas's love of and respect for Nature undoubtedly had their roots in his Lithuanian upbringing. Literally, he sometimes spoke to the mountains as if to friends and brothers. On one occasion, he was unable to photograph Mt. Anne because of the heavy mist surrounding it. Truchanas later told a gathering: 'And I said to the ridge, "Now I go in peace. I know where you are; I will visit you some other time hoping the mist will open up and let me see [you]."'⁷²⁵ In a letter to the author his widow, Melva, says, 'While Olegas was involved in the early movements ... for the conservation of wilderness in Tasmania, Australia and the world, an ideal for which eventually he sacrificed his life, he continued to refer with pride to his native Lithuania as a source of his energy and inspiration'⁷²⁶

Truchanas's influence extended to many parts of Australian society. In 1971, when opening an exhibition of paintings of Lake Pedder, he said:

Is there any reason why, given ... enlightened leadership, the ideal of beauty could not become an accepted goal of national policy? Is there any reason why Tasmania should not be more beautiful on the day we leave than on the day we came? ... If we can revise our attitudes towards the land under our own feet; we can accept a role of steward and depart from the role of conqueror; if we can accept the view that Man and Nature are inseparable parts of the unified whole -- then Tasmania can be a shining beacon in a dull, uniform and largely artificial world.⁷²⁷

⁷²³ Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*, p. 47

⁷²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 55

⁷²⁵ From taped recording of public lecture, Hobart 1971.

⁷²⁶ From letter dated 5 Feb. 1991 to author.

⁷²⁷ Opening speech, Art Exhibition, Richmond, Tasmania, 19 Nov. 1971.

The feelings that Truchanas had of being in harmony with Nature and his eagerness to communicate these feelings with others live on in his landscape photographs which are primarily works of art. It is interesting to note that, while he was good at drawing, Truchanas had no formal art training. His awe and reverence of the natural world gave him, he said a desire 'to be one with Nature'.⁷²⁸ This sense of oneness perhaps identifies him with the work of the renowned Lithuanian painter, M.K. Čiurlionis.⁷²⁹

Truchanas's photographic *oeuvre* divides into three categories:

- black and white landscapes and portraits;
- coloured close-up studies;
- coloured landscapes.

Black and White: This work was produced during his early years in Tasmania when he was often depressed.⁷³⁰ Two examples are *Forest Veteran*, 1951 (ill. 479), and *Dead Valley*, 1952 (ill. 480). Both pictures use an asymmetric composition and portray trees as rugged, gnarled warriors which have battled to the end with the elements. There are analogies with Lithuanian folk lore where trees symbolise people. A similar dramatic approach is seen in the portrait, *Condemned*, 1953 (ill. 481), where the subject⁷³¹ is placed behind bars and uneven lighting creates a contrast between dark and light areas. In the fifties, when Tasmanian photographic portraiture aimed merely at faithful, detailed documentation Truchanas's painterly photographs were 'surprising'.⁷³² He gained many commendations for 'masterly photography' at Tasmanian Photographic Society exhibitions.⁷³³

Coloured Close-up Photography: Truchanas paid close attention to the composition, the rhythm, the division of the picture surface into planes, the lighting, the tonality and the texture of his photographs. His sensitive eye recognized the aesthetics of both the ordinary and the unusual. In *Abstract*, 1968 (ill. 482), the concern is primarily with aesthetic elements. His sensitivity to pattern construction is apparent in the balanced coloured areas linked by black and white lines to form a coherent design. In reality, the subject is a sunlit spill

⁷²⁸ As told by his widow.

⁷²⁹ See ills. 10, 11, 12.

⁷³⁰ From Skorulis letter 6 Dec. 1972.

⁷³¹ The subject is Truchanas's brother-in-law Aleksandras Kantvilas who had been imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp.

⁷³² C.G. Billing in interview, 3 Nov. 1987.

⁷³³ Certificate of Master Photographer presented by Tasmanian Photographic Society, early 1951; Dr. Julian Smith Award for Landscape Photography presented by *Australian Photographic Review*, Nov. 1951 are two of several awards.

of oil on water. Many of his close-up photographs are of flowers, moss and other endemic vegetation and some have scientific as well as aesthetic value. Others are purely artistic exercises, e.g. *Young Sedges in Sandy Shallows*, 1970 (ill. 483). Here the emphasis is on the interplay of rhythms, the horizontal ripples of the sand contrasting with the oblique shadows of the sedges.

Coloured Landscapes: These form the major part of Truchanas's *oeuvre* and were largely responsible for his becoming a legend in his lifetime. His portrayal of the grandeur and sublimity of Nature has strong, emotional impact. His painterly approach is evidenced by the soft contours of clouds and distant mountains, conveying a visionary, dream-like quality. His use of a range of artistic devices -- composition, rhythm, light and tonality -- to give an emotional impact varies from one photograph to another. In *Crowns of the Mountains*, 1968 (ill. 484) and in *Angel Cliffs, Gordon River*, 1970 (ill. 485), the central element is rhythm. In the latter, full dramatic effect is gained in his masterly use of light. Truchanas used mists to advantage to soften contours, to provide an element of mystery or as a compositional device. In *Mount Anne*, 1971 (ill. 486), his use of mist as a compositional device adds a dimension beyond the mere picturesque. Mist plays an important role, too, in *Buckie's Bonnet*, 1971 (ill. 487), giving a mystical quality that is increased by the reflections in the lake below. *Lake Pedder*, 1968 (ill. 488) has a spiritual connotation that evokes powerful notions of eternity.

Although Truchanas's photographs are of Tasmanian scenes, they have a feeling of timelessness and universality that gives them wide appeal.

Sculptor and painter Linas Vaičiulevičius⁷³⁴ was born into a family of six children in Hobart on 25 July 1952. His father Vincas, a carpenter, and his mother Marija appreciated art and frequently visited the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart. After leaving New Town High School in 1972, Vaičiulevičius enrolled at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education to study art. He interrupted his studies after two years and spent several years travelling in Northern and Central Australia where he worked at a variety of building and mining jobs. During this time he produced collages and made preliminary sketches for sculptures.

After returning to Hobart and resuming art study, Vaičiulevičius completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a major in sculpture at the Tasmanian School of Art in 1984. So that he would be able later to pursue an artistic career with some financial security, he spent a further two years working

⁷³⁴ Biographical details recorded in interviews with the artist, Sept. 1987 and in conversations with other members of his family.

in North-Western Australia. Since his return to Hobart he has devoted his time to sculpture.

Most of Vaičiulevičius's semi-abstract, figurative sculptures are solid, monolithic entities cast in bronze. He usually models these in waxed burlap which gives the works a coarse, uneven surface. His work has been influenced by the work of sculptors David Smith and Constantin Brancusi and collage artist Albert Burri. Vaičiulevičius's austerity of means and symbolism is reminiscent of the work of Smith; Brancusi's simplification of form and notion of extracting 'the essence of things' is apparent in Vaičiulevičius's plastic works; and the coarse texture and drama achieved with burlap draws on the work of Burri.

Vaičiulevičius's symbolic structures are mostly inspired by recent Lithuanian history, especially the Russian domination and persecution of freedom fighters. Monuments to their memory are based on the cross, roofed poles and gallows. *For Those Still There*, 1984 (ill. 489), for example, symbolises those who perished: two hands, cast in bronze, are suspended on barbed wire; the wooden pole inscribed with words and syllables from Lithuanian songs adds further tension to the work.

Another of Vaičiulevičius's creations is a cycle of ten bronze sculptures inspired by the odyssey of Simas Kudirka, a Lithuanian seaman who attempted to jump to freedom from a Soviet ship. He was captured, tortured and deported to Siberia. Many years later he was released because of pressure exerted by international human rights groups. In 1980 Kudirka visited Hobart. *A Man Called Simas*, 1984 (ill. 490) is made up of irregular volumes, the articulation of which emphasises the drama and horror of Kudirka's experiences and his determination to persevere.

In subsequent sculptures on the same theme, Vaičiulevičius emphasises spiritual rather than material elements, e.g. *Figure in a Boat*, 1986 (ill. 491). Here, man, boat and sail merge into one unit symbolising that Kudirka's thoughts of escape were all-consuming.

Griškabūdis House, 1985 (ill. 492) refers to Simas Kudirka's birthplace. In this two-dimensional work the house is represented by broken sticks which also represent a crown of thorns. The structure creates a simultaneous metaphor of a face and a house which outgrows its surroundings to symbolise fate and suffering. The sculpture is permeated by the characteristic Lithuanian ethos, a passive acceptance of fate. From a formal point of view, the otherwise solid and monolithic work is relieved by voids, symbolically implying future breakaway.

Vaičiulevičius's concern about the totalitarian system is manifested in his bas-relief, *Hole in the Wall*, 1986 (ill. 493). The artist says that this may be

interpreted as a struggle behind the Iron Curtain or the Berlin Wall, or its meaning can incorporate the universal struggle against tyranny.⁷³⁵ Included in Vaičiulevičius's *oeuvre* are works directly related to Lithuanian folk art, e.g. *Dvasia* (Spirit), 1986 (ill. 494) which is the sculptor's personal interpretation of the Lithuanian Sorrowful God, Rūpintojėlis, in simplified and modernised form.

In his two-dimensional work, Vaičiulevičius often uses burlap and produces painted collages or bas-reliefs where the fabric is cut, folded and over-painted, as in *Man and Boat*, 1990 (ill. 495). This work was awarded the V and G Kazokas prize at the 1990 Lithuanian Art exhibition in Melbourne.

Vaičiulevičius is an active member of the Hobart Lithuanian community and since 1984 has participated in exhibitions, including those held during the biennial Lithuanian Days festivals in various cities.

Woodcarver **Aleksandras Kantvilas**⁷³⁶ was born, the eldest of six children, on 9 January 1920 in Vyžuonėlės village in the county of Utena. His parents, Feliksas and Elena Kantvilas, were farm workers. Despite family hardship, Kantvilas completed secondary education in Utena in 1938. There he was popular among his peers for his caricatures of friends and teachers, but he says he considered art lessons uninteresting.

As free education was provided at the Kaunas Military College, he enrolled for a three-year course. In 1940 the Soviets occupied Lithuania and the cadets were granted early graduation. In the following year, with the Nazi invasion of Lithuania, Kantvilas left the army and enrolled at the University of Vilnius to study medicine. The Germans ordered Lithuania to form an SS battalion and, in retaliation for disobedience, closed all tertiary institutions and arrested forty-six university professors, lecturers, writers and poets and sent them as hostages to the Stutthof concentration camp in northern Germany. Kantvilas, who was suspected of underground activities, was included with the group of academics placed under arrest.

After the war he lived at a displaced persons camp at Bamberg in Austria where he married Nina Truchanas. They migrated to Australia in 1949 and completed a two-year work contract at the Woodside Reception Centre in South Australia. In 1951, at the invitation of his brother-in-law Olegas Truchanas, Kantvilas and his wife moved to Hobart where he worked as a railway guard. In 1952 he enrolled at the Hobart Technical College where he studied art in evening classes with Jack Carrington-Smith and Rosamond McCulloch until

⁷³⁵ As explained by the artist, Dec. 1986.

⁷³⁶ Biographical details recorded during numerous conversations with the artist and his family 1987 to 1992.

1954 when he began part-time study in accountancy. After qualifying as an accountant in 1960, he worked for the next twenty years with a local timber company. He and his wife have three children, all university graduates.

Kantvilas began wood-carving during his time in Stutthof concentration camp. Later, in Tasmania, unusual circumstances brought him back to carving. While waiting for trains to be loaded with coal in remote areas, he found himself with time on his hands and began to carve again. His work is based on traditional Lithuanian concepts but has individual variation. His *Lithuanian Cross*, 1969 (ill. 496) has the traditional symbol of the sun on the intersection of the cross but the base is embellished with an original tulip design.

Kantvilas also reproduces the little chapels which were often nailed to trees in Lithuania. An example is *The Sorrowful God*, 1970 (ill. 497). In this work, Rūpintojėlis assumes the traditional leaning posture and is framed by stylised tulips and crowned with the customary sun and moon. Kantvilas's most original version of the Sorrowful God appears in his sculpture, *In the Trunk*, 1985 (ill. 498). Although in Lithuania carvings of Rūpintojėlis are still sometimes found on tree trunks in forests, Lithuanians in exile have tended to 'beautify' the abode of divinity, by constructing highly polished, elaborate dwellings. In this small folk-art piece Kantvilas has reproduced the divinity in an almost forgotten, primitive setting.

Kantvilas is a prominent member of the Tasmanian Lithuanian community and is the only folk artist in the state practising traditional wood-carving. President of the Hobart Lithuanian Community Council for many years and a foundation member of the HELLP organization,⁷³⁷ he was a member of the *Baltic News* production team and also served for five years as Treasurer of the Hobart Migrant Resource Centre.

Art photographer **Mark Bartkevičius**,⁷³⁸ the younger child of Antanas and Margaret (*nee* Blackburn) Bartkevičius, was born in Launceston, Tasmania, on 30 August 1956. After completing his secondary education at St. Patrick's Catholic College in Launceston, he studied medicine for a year at the University of Tasmania. His interest in photography led him to abandon medical studies and in 1975, while travelling in Indonesia, he decided to become a professional photographer. From 1977 to 1979 he studied photography at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and, after returning to Launceston, joined a group of young art photographers and in 1980 established the 'Lipstick' studio. Their experiments with various techniques resulted in the production in

⁷³⁷ Help Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples.

⁷³⁸ Bio/ed details recorded in interview with the artist 19 Feb. 1991.

Wellington Street, Launceston, of a photographic mural measuring ten metres by two metres.

Bartkevičius began in 1979 to experiment with close-up photographs of flowers, buds and stems, producing ambiguous, biomorphic images. The works from this early period are tonal, with merging, superimposed colour hues and resemble abstract paintings, e.g. *Flower* (ill. 499), *Stem* (ill. 500) and *Leaf* (ill. 501), all 1980. The whole photographic plane is a diffuse colour pool with slow changes in hue and still slower contour changes. The outlines often leave the viewer guessing about the subject matter.

In 1981, Bartkevičius was employed by the Tasmanian Dance Company to document the progress of their dance choreography. Although his photographs from this period are representational, they retain a quality of ambiguity, achieved by photographing the dancers in motion, their flowing costumes creating a sense of vagueness.

In 1983, Bartkevičius took up a position at the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston and about this time began to contribute to several magazines, including *Art and Australia* and *Craft Australia*. Since about 1980 he has participated in several exhibitions. In 1979 he, sculptor Bruce Lamrock and printmaker Steven Turpic held a joint exhibition at the Hawthorn Art Gallery in Melbourne. In 1982 he and Uffi Schultze held a combined exhibition of photographs at the Aspect Design Gallery in Hobart.

LITHUANIANS IN PERTH

Lithuanians who, upon arrival in Australia, were placed in Western Australia were accommodated initially in reception camps at Cunderdin, Greyland and Northam. Like many Lithuanian migrant groups, they immediately organized cultural activities. It is recorded⁷³⁹ that at Northam camp in 1949 there were eighty-one Lithuanians; a male choir was conducted by sculptor Balys Grėbliūnas,⁷⁴⁰ and a folk-dance group was active under the leadership of Marija Baronaitė-Grėbliūnas. In the same year a folk-art exhibition was staged, the curator being actor Stasys Skorulis.⁷⁴¹ At Greyland camp Lithuanians formed a male vocal octet with conductor Algimantas Taškūnas and also folk-dance and Scouts groups. In 1949 the male singers performed on local ABC radio.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁹ A. Šalkauskas in *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 245

⁷⁴⁰ See pp. 271-272

⁷⁴¹ *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 245

⁷⁴² *ibid*

On completion of their work contracts in various parts of Western Australia, a number of Lithuanians chose to settle in Perth where, by 1960, some 350 comprised the local community.⁷⁴³

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Activities of the Lithuanian community in Perth over the years have been somewhat irregular, tending to depend on the initiative of a few individuals and being mainly *ad hoc* and short-lived. The first formal unit, established in 1950, was the Storm Sports Club whose members also took on responsibility for organizing commemorative day celebrations. In 1951, people belonging to the sports club established the Perth Lithuanian Community Council with Zenonas Sidaravičius as first president.

It is recorded that the community was 'inclined to passivity' and had few active members.⁷⁴⁴ In 1958 the Community Council joined with representatives of the Latvian and Estonian communities to form the Western Australian branch of the Baltic Committee; Dr. Zigmas Budrikis was the Lithuanian representative for almost thirty years. The committee's major aim was to maintain public awareness of what it saw as the true political situation in the Baltic states, particularly by means of lobbying politicians and the press.⁷⁴⁵ In 1972, following the self-immolation by a young student, Romas Kalanta, in Lithuania in protest at Russian occupation of his country, the Community Council responded by forming the Defend Lithuania Committee.⁷⁴⁶ Its membership represented Soviet-occupied Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. The Council was represented also on international organizations such as Captive Nations and the World Freedom League,⁷⁴⁷ the aims of which were similar: political meetings often included cultural performances. One well publicised local result of their activities was the reaction to Prime Minister Whitlam's 1974 *de jure* recognition of Soviet occupation of the Baltic states: mass demonstrations in Perth were followed by resolutions, petitions and declarations.

⁷⁴³ Andrius Klimaitis in *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 245

⁷⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 247

⁷⁴⁵ A. Statkus in *Metraštis*, Vol. 2, p. 349

⁷⁴⁶ Lietuvai ginti komitetas

⁷⁴⁷ B. Steckis, *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 350

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Weekend School

This was established by the Perth Lithuanian Community Council in 1951 but was short-lived.⁷⁴⁸

Ballet

One of the first Lithuanian cultural achievements in Perth was the 1949 ballet performance by Regina Ratas with Janina and Boris Čiunovas and their daughter Inga in *Die Fliedermäus*. In the following year, Delibes' ballet *Coppelia* was staged with the same principal dancers and stage decor by Vaclovas Ratas.⁷⁴⁹

Folk-dance Groups

A number of folk-dancing groups have been formed over the years. Many in the reception camps were of short duration as members were assigned to work in other parts of the state; two groups formed in Perth in 1949 and 1957 respectively each lasted only a few years.⁷⁵⁰ In 1968 Veronika Miliauskas and Birutė Kateiva formed Šatrija, a folk-dance group which was directed by second-generation Lithuanian, Eugenijus Stankevičius, from 1970 until its disbandment in 1981. From 1984 until 1985 a dance group was led by Birutė Radzivanas. Over the past twenty years, many performances have been given by the various Perth folk-dance ensembles at festivals, fairs, concerts, commemorative day celebrations and on television.⁷⁵¹

Musical Groups

These, like the folk-dance groups, have generally been of short duration. An exception was a male octet, conducted by Algimantas Taškūnas, which was active until 1970 when Taškūnas moved from Perth to Tasmania. A male choir formed in 1949 lasted for a number of years, and several trios and quartets were

⁷⁴⁸ Klimaitis, *ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 246

⁷⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁵⁰ *ibid*, p. 247

⁷⁵¹ Jonas Miliauskas, *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 357

in existence for short periods. In 1979 Viktoras Skrolys (1904-1989) organized a women's choir which operated for ten years. A number of theatrical performances were staged during the sixties when a group of amateur actors presented four plays.⁷⁵²

Press and Radio

In 1975, Viktoras Skrolys proposed to the Perth Lithuanian Community Council that a monthly bulletin of local news and announcements should be published. Skrolys became the first editor of the Lithuanian newsletter, *Žinutės* (Little News) and held the position until 1982 when he was succeeded by Julius Čyžas. In 1983 second-generation Lithuanians began publication of a bi-lingual bulletin, *Kas naujo?* (What's New?) which published eight issues during its one-year existence.⁷⁵³ The first issues were edited by Ričardas Repševičius, later issues by Eugenijus Stankevičius. From 1976 until his death in 1989 Viktoras Skrolys conducted a programme on Radio 6NR. Technical assistance was given by Eugenijus Stankevičius and the programme included news items, Lithuanian music, interviews and poetry recitations.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

A number of activities were carried on from their beginnings in reception camps near Perth. In 1958 Leonas Beitmanas formed scouts groups for both girls and boys.⁷⁵⁴ Members gave folk-dance and other performances at a number of Lithuanian national and religious celebrations until they ceased activity in the seventies. A basketball team from the Storm Sports Club played successfully against Australian teams and won the Perth championship in 1950. The Storm Sports Club disbanded after many members moved away from Perth. A second sports club, Neris, named after a river in Lithuania, was established in 1965 but was not as successful and ceased to function in 1969. Ten years later, the Tauras (Aurochs) Sports Club took part in inter-ethnic, intrastate and interstate competitions.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² J. Čyžas and T. Lingienė in *40 metų*, p. 137

⁷⁵³ *ibid*

⁷⁵⁴ Klimaitis in *Metraštinis*, Vol. I, p. 247

⁷⁵⁵ S. Kuzmickas, *ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 363

LITHUANIAN HOUSE

The acquisition in 1980 of a Lithuanian House in South Perth was due largely to the efforts of Eugenijus Stankevičius, b. 1949. Since then, much community effort has been given to the renovation and improvement of the building which is now the venue for all community activities.⁷⁵⁶

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN PERTH

In Perth there have been four Lithuanian artists two of whom are no longer living. First-generation painter Ričardas Francas contributes both artistic and musical talents to community activities. Second-generation painter and ceramist Linda Henfry was born and educated in Western Australia. Folk artists Jonas Liutikas and Kazys Žuromskis, both now deceased, used their artistic skills to keep alive traditional forms of Lithuanian woodcarving.

Painter **Ričardas Francas**⁷⁵⁷ was born in Kaunas on 9 October 1930, and was encouraged by his parents from an early age to paint, to draw and to play the piano. In 1944, the family -- Eugenijus Francas, an engineering graduate, his wife Jusefa and their four children -- fled to Germany. After settling in a refugee camp at Seligenstadt at Hesse in central Germany, Ričardas resumed his secondary studies at the Lithuanian High School established in the camp. There he came into contact with artist Juozas Racibarskas, an exponent of realism, who in the period 1946 to 1949 taught Francas the basic skills of drawing and painting.

In 1949 Francas migrated to Australia. He settled in Western Australia, later marrying and raising four children. His family responsibilities and factory work did not leave him time to pursue artistic interests until almost thirty years after coming to Australia. In 1978 he began to study painting at the Carrington Adult Education Art Centre. By this time he had become a self-employed taxi driver. This sometimes gave him opportunities to observe the countryside. Whenever possible, he would photograph or sketch appealing scenery and would later paint the scenes in his studio. He began to exhibit his work regularly at local art shows.

Francas works in an impressionistic style using watercolour or Indian ink. His subject matter is the sunny West Australian landscape. He sometimes

⁷⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁵⁷ Bio/ed details received by letter dated 2 July 1989 to author from the artist.

portrays Nature in an exalted way, as in *Rocky Outcrop*, 1985 (ill. 502), but most of his watercolour paintings and Indian ink drawings depict cosy scenes which invite the viewer to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere, e.g. *Bridgetown Hills*, 1985 (ill. 503). His composition is informal, most often showing an oblique or high horizon with the foreground focusing on Nature. Occasional, inconspicuously placed buildings imply an unimposing presence by Man. Francas's palette consists of light, local colours applied in a subtle, tonal manner.

Francas admires the Impressionist painters of the Heidelberg School as well as Hans Heysen, and his paintings reflect their influence. He is a member of the Blackwood Artisans Guild and participates in their exhibitions. In 1979 he held his first solo exhibition at the Canning Council Library, and in 1982 won first prize in the Art Awards established by the Canning City Council. Francas is an active member of the Perth Lithuanian community and regularly provides accordion accompaniment for local folk-dance groups.

Painter, ceramist and art teacher **Linda Henfry**⁷⁵⁸ was born on 17 January 1955 at Merredin in Western Australia. She is the only child of Viktoras and Lisalotte Skrollys and says, 'My childhood was rich in Lithuanian folklore. Dad made sure that I developed a love for his native country.' She learned Lithuanian nursery rhymes and songs and says that she inherited her father's 'love and respect for Nature.' From the age of ten she attended the Iona Presentation Ladies College in Mosman Park, Perth. There, her drawing and painting talent was recognized and developed and she was responsible for the stage decor for a number of school plays.

In 1973 she entered Churchlands Teachers College and graduated in 1975 with a major in ceramics. In 1976 she studied design in an Art Education course at Curtin University and in 1978-79 was a graduate diploma student in Art Education at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. This was followed by a period of art teaching at Kalbani and Pingelly schools. In 1980, she married Craig Henfry and they have two children.

Since 1985 she has worked in her own studio at Bunbury. Her main interest and inspiration in her painting is landscape, perhaps in part influenced by her father's attitude to Nature. Although she admires the work of the Impressionists and of Fred Williams, her approach is intimate and feminine. She has a romantic view of the world and creates graceful and peaceful scenes. Some of her paintings are miniature representations of wide, panoramic vistas;

⁷⁵⁸ Bio/ed details received by letter, undated to author from the artist.

others are impressionistic, closed scenes of the Australian bushland and convey a metaphysical feeling.

Henfry says, 'We can learn such a lot about ourselves from being alone in a landscape.' She approaches landscape painting with the intention of making it appear real and of providing the viewer with the opportunity to feel what she sees as the pristine, enchanting and sensuous aspects of Nature. She began first to work with collage, using dried and coloured wildflowers to enhance the painted landscape, e.g. *Landscape 1* (ill. 504) and *Landscape 2* (ill. 505), both 1984. Collages created an atmosphere of meadows and gardens, but proved not to be durable. For a more lasting result she turned to painting in gouache, acrylic and watercolour. Strong fascination with trees, and related animistic notions, led her to depict them as majestic clumps and groves. She says, 'It is the trees in the landscape that hold me captivated. In each tree I see something of the perfection that man longs for -- the absolute 'isness' of being.'

Her paintings, *Time Is* (ill. 506) and *Soul Connections*, (ill. 507) both 1989, show a tight rhythm that unites the trees in brotherhood, intending an analogy with the existence of humanity through the ages. Her interpretation implies interchangeability between two worlds, a belief strongly held in some bygone cultures. Henfry's paintings, although executed in traditional, impressionistic style, are not merely objective statements of visual reality but are emotional expressions of the artist's self-identification. She prefers a restrained palette with bright colour accents which highlight with the sun's influence upon the earth and with which she embellishes the rhythmic procession of trees which, in the Lithuanian tradition, she regards as brothers of humanity. Henfry says that she aims to 'express one's own soul' in such a way so as to completely involve the viewer in her admiration for the harmony in Nature.

Folk artist Jonas Liutikas (1906-1986)⁷⁵⁹ was born in the small Lithuanian town of Gargždai on 28 November 1906. He was orphaned at an early age and was brought up by 'good people' who taught him carpentry. In 1944 he fled to the West; after the war he was in a displaced persons camp in the British Zone in Germany.

In 1948 Liutikas migrated to Australia and spent two years working under contract in an asbestos quarry in the Northern Territory. In 1950 he married Ona Jurgelytė. He worked as a carpenter until his retirement in the late sixties. After he retired, carving became an important pursuit. His work shows great attention to detail and was often presented by him to prominent Australians in the hope, he said, that they would 'remember and help Lithuania.' His

⁷⁵⁹ Biog/ed details received by letter, dated 10 May 1992 from the artist's widow Ona Liutikas.

Roofed Pole, 1982 (ill. 508) shows him to have been a sensitive folk artist with a keen sense of proportion. The folk-art ornamentation is authentically and tastefully executed.

Liutikas was an active member of the Lithuanian community: for many years he was treasurer of the Perth Lithuanian Community Council and was also president of the Ramovė (Retired Lithuanian Soldiers) Organization.

Although it is known that wood-carver **Kazys Žuromskis** (1901-1980)⁷⁶⁰ was born in Lithuania, no details of his childhood, his education or his movements prior to his migration to Australia are available. It is known that he lived in Perth after arriving there in 1949 and was an active member of the Ramovė Organization for many years.⁷⁶¹ His folk-art repertoire included traditional carved Lithuanian crosses, roofed poles and national emblems. Many were presented to visiting dignitaries, community officials and friends. *Vyris*, (ill. 3) the only example of Žuromskis's work which the author has been able to trace, is described by Perth community members as a typical example of his work.

LITHUANIANS IN BALLARAT

Karolis Podėnas and his son Almis,⁷⁶² both art photographers, live and work in Ballarat. As the only Lithuanian family there, they say that they sometimes feel as though they are 'living on a Lithuanian island.'

The fourth of the seven children of Jokūbas and Teresė Podėnas, **Karolis Podėnas** was born in Riga, Latvia on 25 March 1914. At the end of World War I the family returned to Lithuania where Karolis completed primary and secondary school. In 1938 he enrolled to study electrical engineering at Klaipėda Technical College. His study was interrupted by the German occupation of Klaipėda in 1939, and he moved to Panevėžys where he graduated in 1941. During this time he says he was inspired by Tolstoy and Ghandi's philosophy of passive resistance and he became a pacifist, refusing army conscription, becoming a vegetarian and learning Esperanto. He also developed an interest in philately.

⁷⁶⁰ The author tried unsuccessfully over many years to contact the late artist's son, Henrikas. Other members of the Perth Lithuanian community were unable to provide biographical information.

⁷⁶¹ Klimaitis in *Metrašitis*, Vol. 2, p. 361

⁷⁶² Biographical details of both artists recorded during interviews 3 Jan. 1990.

In 1943 Podėnas married Apolonija Rimdeikaitė and in 1944 they fled to the West where their longest stay was at Nürnberg refugee camp. Following his correspondence with a Tasmanian Esperantist, Eino Looiits, he decided to migrate to Australia. He arrived with his wife in Melbourne in 1948 and carried out his work contract in a brick factory.

At an Esperanto convention held in Melbourne in 1950, Podėnas was persuaded to move to Ballarat. He gained employment as an electrician at a weaving factory and remained there until his retirement some thirty years later. In 1962 his son, Almis, was born. In 1976 both father and son became members of the Ballarat Camera Club and have participated regularly in photographic exhibitions and competitions. At first, Podėnas was concerned mainly with the documentation of events, places and people, but later began to photograph for purely aesthetic reasons and in response to personal experiences. He works only in black and white, and his compositions are mainly open. His themes are generally landscapes, somewhat related to the Lithuanian landscape. Their prevailing atmosphere is lyrical with slight dramatic accentuation, e.g. *Gale lauko toli* (Far in the Field), 1975 (ill. 509). The title is taken from a Lithuanian folk song about a conversation among three trees. In other landscape photographs the lyrical mood is even more pronounced, e.g. *The Dunes*, 1981 (ill. 510) or more dramatic and hinting at metaphysical transience, e.g. *Iraš jaunas buvau* (Once I was Young, Too), 1982 (ill. 511).

Podėnas's work is marked by strong composition. The delicate gradation of grey tonings endows his pictures with tranquillity, while the sharp contrast of light and dark and the linear rhythms add drama. As well as being a member of the Ballarat Camera Club, Podėnas belongs to the Melbourne Leica Society and has received many awards locally, nationally and internationally. Data from the earliest exhibitions is not available, but from 1984 he has received a number of awards. He is an active participant in Lithuanian art circles.

The only child of Karolis and Apolonija Podėnas, art photographer and photographic journalist **Almis Podėnas** was born in Ballarat, Victoria, on 29 March 1962 and from 1975 to 1979 attended Ballarat High School. Although he says he did not have art lessons at school, he became interested in graphic art through perusing books at home and from his father's photography. In 1976 he became the first junior member of the Ballarat Camera Club. He worked as a photographer at the Ballarat College of Advanced Education during 1981 and 1982 and in 1983 studied photography at the Ballarat School of Mines. In the following year he studied photography at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and in 1985 became a photo-journalist with the *Ballarat News*. He

is currently a member of both the Ballarat Camera Club and the Melbourne Leica Society.

Almis Podėnas's principal photography teacher has always been his father. Both have participated in the same exhibitions. Almis says he is particularly interested in urban life, political persons and exciting events such as speed car racing. In urban photography he looks for unusual angles and produces spectacular images, e.g. *City Lights*, 1988 (ill. 512). The clear lines and sharp contrast between light and dark bring his work close to graphic art. In photographing personalities he says he favours sports people and politicians because of their total involvement in what they do. The concentration of the sportsman and the intensity of the politician give Podėnas great satisfaction. What his father finds in Nature, he finds in human psychology, e.g. *The Final Shot*, 1985 (ill. 513).

In 1982 he was awarded a silver medal for his slide, *Rushing*, at the International Exhibition of Photography held in Sydney. Podėnas participates regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

LITHUANIANS IN BRISBANE

The first Lithuanians arrived in Brisbane in 1948, the males being sent soon afterwards to work on sugar-cane plantations, at sawmills or at brickworks while women and children were accommodated at reception centres at Wacol and Enoggera. The men were able to visit their families only at weekends and on public holidays. On completion of their two-year work contracts, many Lithuanian families settled in Brisbane where, according to records, in 1956 there were 287 living: 136 male, 54 female and 97 children.⁷⁶³ In the following years, the numbers declined as young people, males in particular, left Brisbane for larger Lithuanian centres.

Although in the early post-immigration period, community gatherings were attended by two-thirds of Lithuanians living in Brisbane, attendance declined as time went by and the Lithuanian community 'always lacked ... individuals ... willing to stand for election to the Brisbane Lithuanian Community Council'.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶³ Povilas Kviecinskas in *Metrašius*. Vol. 2, p. 361

⁷⁶⁴ *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 205

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

In 1949 the Lithuanian Association was formed, with Jonas Petrauskas as president. In 1950 it became the Brisbane Lithuanian Community headed by an elected council with Kajetonas Sakalauskas as the first president. Lithuanian activities were most intense in 1956 when the Community Council was led by Stasys Sagatys.⁷⁶⁵ This period was followed by a lull until the arrival in 1968 of Fr. Pranas BaciŃskas, b. 1912, who was instrumental in revitalising community action. At his instigation, the Community Council joined with other organizations: the Lithuanian community was represented on the Captive Nations Association committee by Fr. BačiŃskas and on the Ethnic Council by Joan Einikis. For ten years from 1974 Kazys Bagdonas was president of the Community Council.⁷⁶⁶

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Folk-dance Groups

In 1949, Adomas Laukaitis formed a folk-dance group that performed regularly at both Lithuanian and Australian functions until 1958.⁷⁶⁷ In 1959 the group reformed with younger dancers and in 1975 a children's group began. In 1963 Regina and Juozas Platkauskas formed a troupe of about thirty dancers that performed at Lithuanian Days and Warana festivals until its disbandment in 1980.⁷⁶⁸

Musical Groups

In 1950 Klemensas Stankūnas organized a mixed choir that was active until 1955.⁷⁶⁹ As well as giving choral performances, members staged several plays. In 1955 a male choir was formed by Pranas Budrys, and in 1958 Stankūnas formed a choir of female singers who have continued to perform until the present time at Lithuanian functions, church services, gatherings arranged by the Captive Nations Association and at various ethnic clubs.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁵ *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 184

⁷⁶⁶ From a letter dated 23 Sept. 1992 from Kazys Bagdonas to author.

⁷⁶⁷ *Metraščių*, Vol. 1, p. 184

⁷⁶⁸ R. Platkauskas and V. Maliauskas, *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 209

⁷⁶⁹ KvieciŃskas, *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 184

⁷⁷⁰ Klemensas Stankūnas, *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 208

Weekend Schools

The first established by Kajetonas Sakalauskas in 1951 operated for only a few months. Subsequent schools have been commenced by Stasys Sagatys in 1956, and by Nijolė Stelmokas in 1957, the former lasting for six months and the latter until the seventies.

Radio

As there has never been any Lithuanian paper produced in Brisbane, radio has been the only means of disseminating local news and information. A Lithuanian radio programme is conducted once every three weeks by Fr. Bačinskas on Radio 4RB.⁷⁷¹

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Scouting

The Brisbane Lithuanian Scouts Organization was established in 1949 and operated until 1978. During the sixties the scouts group carried out a programme that included folk-dancing, excursions, camping and jamborees. Scouts performed at camp-fire nights and at Lithuanian commemorative events.⁷⁷²

Sport

In 1951 sports activities were organized by Mikas Rudys and in 1952 the Tauras (Aurochs) Sports Club was formed. Until the sixties, young sportsmen, particularly basketballers, were enthusiastic and successful, but activities diminished over the years as many young people moved from Brisbane to work in other places.

⁷⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 214

⁷⁷² Bronius Žalys, *ibid.*, p. 210

ESTABLISHMENT OF LITHUANIAN HOUSE

In 1969 Fr. Bačinskas provided funding for the purchase of a house at 192 Montague Road, West End, for community use.⁷⁷³ Members of the local Lithuanian community renovated the building so that it would be suitable for rehearsals, meetings and commemorative celebrations. In order to facilitate the legal transfer of the property from private to community ownership, to oversee its administration and to promote cultural activities, the Father Bačinskas Lithuanian Association Incorporated was established in 1986. Civil engineer Kazys Bagdonas has been president of the association since its inception.⁷⁷⁴

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN BRISBANE

Only one Lithuanian artist is known to live in Brisbane. Ceramist, painter and teacher **Eli Statulevičius**⁷⁷⁵ was born on 19 September 1950 to Jonas and Marta Statulevičius at the Greta (NSW) migrant reception camp. After completing her secondary education she worked for six years as a laboratory assistant and for three years was self-employed in a garden nursery. Her interest in the humanities led her to study at the University of Queensland. In 1979 she graduated with bachelors degrees in both Arts and Divinity and in 1991 was awarded a Diploma of Social Science by the University of New England (Armidale, NSW). She is currently completing a Bachelors Honours degree in Psychology at the University of Queensland.

After her 1979 graduation Statulevičius became actively interested in ceramics. She says that, encouraged by the positive response of others, in 1985 she undertook a six-month course in sculpture at the Southport College of Technical and Further Education. In 1986, she completed a course in stoneware glazing at the Flying Arts School in Brisbane. From the beginning of her career as a ceramist she says she had a desire to earn a living from it but this did not eventuate.

Statulevičius's ceramics are executed with classical restraint and serenity, their form controlled with precision and their glazes and decoration applied with clarity and austerity. In the early eighties her work was mainly functional and included cups, saucers, pots and vases. She also produced small sculptural figurines and clay jewellery. At that time, she was striving for control of the medium and for perfection of form. From about 1984, she began to

⁷⁷³ Petras Bačinskas, *ibid.* p. 211

⁷⁷⁴ From Bagdonas letter, 23 Sept. 1992.

⁷⁷⁵ Bio/cd details received in letters to author, 1991.

concentrate on decorative aspects as a means of incorporating her philosophical interests and ideas. *Decanter and Vase*, 1985 (ill. 514), is an example of her work of this period. Both items, rendered in carefully controlled form, have smooth black surfaces with cobalt-chrome glaze. Their sparse, gold-line ornamentation is reminiscent of pre-Christian, mythological symbols.

Her most imposing works are hand-painted plates which may be regarded as tondo paintings in ceramics. Two examples are *Comet* (ill. 515) and *Directing Stardust* (ill. 516), both 1985. These are self-contained, abstract paintings with symbols connoting heavenly bodies. In each, the asymmetrical design is clear and restrained, leaving large areas of atmospheric space in which the comets and stars are placed. The restricted colour scheme helps to create an overall impression of classical harmony. In the late eighties Statulevičius's interests turned to painting which at first she regarded as recreation. She admired the Impressionist painters for their jubilant colour softness and these qualities are embodied in her watercolour painting, *Flowers*, 1990 (ill. 517).

Statulevičius participates regularly in exhibitions and competitions in Queensland. She is a past secretary of the Gold Coast Potters Association, has taught pottery at the Association's Pottery School in Brisbane and at the Southport Special School, and conducts a monthly pottery group at the Majella House Women's Refuge on the Gold Coast.

Neither Eli Statulevičius nor her parents have been involved in Lithuanian community activities in Brisbane.

LITHUANIANS IN BEECHWORTH

It is known that in 1949 a Lithuanian Association was formed by a group of Lithuanian males living in Beechworth, Victoria.⁷⁷⁶ Records show that the Association still existed in 1953 when Lithuanians combined with Estonians and Latvians in a commemorative service to mark the anniversary of the 1941 Soviet deportation of Baltic people to Siberia.⁷⁷⁷ There is no information after that time, probably because after completing their work contracts most men moved to larger Lithuanian centres.

In the middle seventies however, painter, photographer and art teacher Rita Lazauskas,⁷⁷⁸ a second-generation Lithuanian moved to Beechworth and

⁷⁷⁶ The exact number is not known but was presumably about twenty.

⁷⁷⁷ *Menašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 181

⁷⁷⁸ Biographical details given by the artist in letter dated 19 Feb. 1992.

practises there as an artist as well as being active in local Australian community affairs.

Lazauskas was born to Edvardas and Elija Lazauskas in Adelaide on 16 December 1958. During her childhood she participated in many Lithuanian activities: she belonged to the Lithuanian Scouts Organization; she was a student, later a teacher, at the Lithuanian weekend school; and she was a member of the folk-dance group. She was encouraged to draw by her mother who painted collages.

After completing study at St. Aloysius College, Adelaide, in 1975, she began to travel with her husband Bruce Derrick, eventually settling at Beechworth in Victoria. In 1982 her son Seth was born. In 1984 she enrolled at the Riverina-Murray Institute in Albury and in 1987 gained an Associate Diploma in Visual Arts, having majored in painting. In 1989 she was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) degree from Charles Sturt University. During her studies she became particularly interested in medieval, baroque and surrealist art, especially that of Mexicans Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo.

Lazauskas's art is figurative and surrealistic and she generally features a single, dominant figure, often with an imaginative, panoramic background. She writes, 'The sources of inspiration for my work are history and mythology -- and, in particular, where the two overlap. I aim to combine the richness and theatricality of Baroque and Medieval Art with the freedom and complexity of Surrealism and metaphysical painting'. In some of her paintings the principal figure, although dominant, is restrained and often pensive, e.g. *Self-portrait as a Lithuanian*, 1990 (ill. 518). She explains, 'The globe of the universe or crystal ball is a surrealist element ... perhaps indicating Lithuania's uncertain future'. Her other paintings are remote from everyday life, e.g. *Self-portrait as a Gardener*, 1990 (ill. 519) in which she exhibits a florid, rococo-like treatment of the figure in illusionistic space. The surrealist element, the heavenly cage, gives a sense of splendour and serenity.

Lazauskas participates in local art exhibitions and since 1983 has been an active member of the Beechworth Arts Council and is the current secretary. Since 1987 she has conducted a Life Drawing programme at the Beechworth Secretarial College and an Arts programme at the local Art Community Centre. In 1989 she was a tutor in painting at Technical and Further Education classes in Wangaratta and at the Beechworth Training Prison. During the Yackandandah Folk Dance Festival in the same year she conducted a Lithuanian Folkdance Workshop.

LITHUANIANS IN WOLLONGONG

In 1948 the first Lithuanians arrived to work at the Port Kembla steelworks and settled mainly in nearby Wollongong. By 1952, the number of Lithuanians living there was about two hundred.⁷⁷⁹ In 1953, the Wollongong Lithuanian Community Council was formed with Matas Gailiūnas (1918-1992) its first and long-serving president. The Community Council regularly organized Lithuanian national and religious commemorative events and in 1955 established a weekend school which operated for a year. It has been the only council in Australia to celebrate the traditional Lithuanian Day of the Sea (Jūros diena). This is attended also by compatriots from Sydney.⁷⁸⁰

Over the years many Lithuanians moved from Wollongong. By the seventies community activities had declined but several younger Lithuanians had become involved in organizations across the wider community: Rūta Mataitis, for example, was active not only in the Community Council but also in the Ethnic Council, the Grants Allocation Committee, the Migrant Resource Centre and as a member of the Advisory Committee on Arts to the NSW Premier. In 1972 she was awarded the Order of Australia medal, General Division, for service to the community.

The Wollongong Lithuanian community has produced one painter, Sigita Gailiūnas and one art collector, Bronius Šrėdersas.

Painter and art teacher Sigita Gailiūnas⁷⁸¹ was born on 1 November 1958 in Bulli, NSW and grew up by the sea in a district where mining was the main industry. Her parents were Bronė and Matas Gailiūnas. Her father was a former Lithuanian agriculturalist and became president of the Wollongong Lithuanian Community Council. She remembers that her first artistic inspiration came from her early childhood when she used to watch her mother carving miniature birds and animals. Sigita attended Corrimal High School where her artistic talent was encouraged. In 1974, while still at high school, she won first prize in a design competition held by the Wollongong City Council for a mural on a mining theme. Her work, measuring 50 metres by one-and-a-half metres was painted at the Crown Central Shopping Complex.

In 1977 she began art studies at the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney, and while there won the Festival of Wollongong Art Poster competition. After graduation in 1979, she gained a

⁷⁷⁹ Matas Gailiūnas in *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 283

⁷⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁷⁸¹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 14 Feb. 1988.

Diploma of Education from Sydney Teachers College in the following year, and has taught art at high schools in the Wollongong-Port Kembla area since 1981. Following a visit to Lithuania in 1982, she has participated regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Gailiūnas's work consists of representational seascapes, landscapes and cityscapes and shows an impressionist influence. She prefers either to use an open composition or to give a 'bird's-eye view', and renders her images in light, muted colours with smooth brush application. Her inspiration comes from her immediate surroundings: *Steelworks Magic*, 1979 (ill. 520), for example, depicts the play of smoke above the factory chimneys. There is never an image of Man in her paintings, although his presence is implied. In her seascapes, she celebrates the spirit of the sea and the seashore, emphasising a peaceful atmosphere, as in *Sunday*, 1983 (ill. 521) and *Tide*, 1985 (ill. 522).

Bronius Šrėdersas (1910-1982, see ill. 523)⁷⁸² a steelworker who was also an art collector, left his art treasures, currently valued at over a million dollars, to the City of Wollongong. The collection was amassed during his twenty-five years of working at the Port Kembla Steelworks and consists mainly of works by Australian masters. Included are paintings by Nicolas Chevalier, Rupert Bunny, Anthony Dattilo-Rubbo, Arthur Streeton, John William Ashton, Julian Ashton, Hans Heysen, Roland Wakelin, Jack Carrington-Smith, Grace Crossington-Smith, Pro Hart, Thomas Gleghorn, Michael Kmit, James Gleeson, the Lindsays, Margaret Preston and others. The Art Gallery catalogue of the collection lists eighty-seven paintings, eleven folk-art pieces from New Guinea, thirty-one items of fine china and five miniatures (see ill. 524).

Šrėdersas was born on 4 December 1910 in the resort city of Simferopol situated on the shore of the Black Sea on the Crimea Peninsula where, presumably, at the time the Šrėdersas family was on holiday. His parents, Maksimilijonas and Ona Marija Šrėdersas, were wealthy landowners from the Lithuanian county of Ukmergė. Because of the turmoil which followed the Russian Revolution, they were not able to return to independent Lithuania until 1925. In 1933 Bronius Šrėdersas completed his high school education at Ukmergė. His art teacher there had been Eugenijus Kulvietis (1883-1959), a realist painter who emphasised colour harmony, stylisation and classical, sober composition in his paintings (ill. 22). In later life, Šrėdersas often talked about the paintings he remembered in his parents' home where many forms of artistic expression had been greatly appreciated. As far as is known, some were also practised: his father was a 'Sunday painter' and both father and son restored

⁷⁸² Information gained in interviews, Dec. 1989 with Rūta Mataitis, Matas Gailiūnas, President of the Australian Lithuanian Community Council of Wollongong and Barbara Tuckerman, Director of the Wollongong City Gallery.

and rejuvenated oil paintings. Surviving letters and the memories of compatriots reveal Bronius Šrėdersas to have been a gentle, diligent perfectionist, fluent in spoken and written Lithuanian and in Russian, Polish, French and German.

In 1935 Šrėdersas was employed by the Department of Security in Kaunas. Later, he was transferred to Vilnius where he was working when the Soviets occupied Lithuania in 1940. Fearing political danger, Šrėdersas left Vilnius and worked in disguise as a seaman on the steamboat *Liūtas* (Lion) on the River Nemunas. It seems that during the German occupation that followed he continued to work on the boat and kept a low profile.

In 1944 he fled to the West, arriving at a displaced persons camp in Flensburg in Germany, close to the border with Denmark. In 1950, Šrėdersas migrated to Australia 'with nothing'⁷⁸³ and began a two-year work contract at Port Kembla Steelworks. Because, he said, his neighbours and workmates 'couldn't pronounce his Lithuanian name, Bronius',⁷⁸⁴ they called him Bob and this form of address became usual. Matas Gailiūnas recalls Šrėdersas's visits to community meetings where he preferred always to be seated inconspicuously at the back of the room. In the early years of the arrival of Lithuanians in Australia, there were some twenty or thirty young, unmarried Lithuanian men working in the mines, most of whom formed a 'brotherhood' and spent time drowning their sorrows in hotels. However, Šrėdersas did not seek their company; neither did he become very involved in community activities, preferring always to be a 'loner'. It seems that his way of escaping loneliness, the dusty work and the rowdy company of his workfellows was to retreat to the aesthetic world to which he had been accustomed in his childhood and youth. The images from a more harmonious world must have provided some compensation for the depressing reality in which he lived.

In 1956, having built a modest fibro cottage in Cringila, a suburb of Port Kembla where 'forty percent of the population is non-English speaking',⁷⁸⁵ Šrėdersas bought his first painting at auction in Sydney. He described the purchase to student Karen Lateo: 'I saw one painting, a watercolour. They asked for this painting five pounds to start. Nobody wanted. Three pounds -- nobody. Two pounds -- nobody. One guinea. This painting for one guinea I can buy. I raise my hand. And I bought my first painting. I looked, -- Syd Long -- who is this artist? I went to the New South Wales Art Gallery and I found this Syd Long there in the gallery. Oh my goodness! It 'means it is possible to buy here good paintings for a song, for pennies. So I

⁷⁸³ Šrėdersas often used this phrase to describe his arrival in Australia.

⁷⁸⁴ Paddy Ginnane, *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 July 1976, p. 5

⁷⁸⁵ Alderman Harold Hansen, *ibid*

start to collect'.⁷⁸⁶ The labourer from the steelworks had bought his first painting, *Herring Fleet at Sea* by Sydney Long.

Wollongong artist Nina Oliver, from whom he bought another painting, visited his home in the sixties and describes what she saw: 'Every wall was covered with paintings, from ceiling to floor, even the kitchen. There were wonderful paintings propped up behind the stove, on a shelf above the toilet, under the bed. The furniture was sparse -- a table and two wooden chairs, linoleum on the floor. But you could not see the walls; there was no space between the paintings.'⁷⁸⁷

A major reason for collecting seems to have been Šrėdersas's enjoyment of the beauty which art provides. He said, 'Recognising beauty is the important thing.'⁷⁸⁸ His purchases were limited by the availability of works of art at auction rooms and by his financial resources and he bought only what he liked and what he could relate to his own experiences. Thus, his collection consisted mainly of realistic, romantic works -- a reflection of the kinds of paintings that had adorned Lithuanian estate houses in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The subject matter, too, related to what he had seen in his younger days -- romantic landscapes -- and in his later years as a migrant -- working men, industrial sites and 'ordinary', working-class people.

There are no abstract or modern paintings, probably because they had no place in his memories of Lithuania. However, in the late fifties Šrėdersas began to buy New Guinea folk-art items, perhaps reflecting an appreciation of folk art gained from his Lithuanian schooling.

In 1975 Šrėdersas retired and, in 1976, made a bequest to the people of Wollongong, donating his collection (with the exception of a print of the Lithuanian coat of arms) as a gesture of thanks. After twenty-five years in his adopted country, feelings of gratitude for the political security and freedom which Australia provided had largely replaced his former feelings of humiliation and degradation. Šrėdersas said, 'The most important thing in life is freedom'.⁷⁸⁹ The paintings, he said, were '... for the young people to learn, for old people to enjoy, and for me it is the realisation of a life's dedication'.⁷⁹⁰

The local press reported that 'the Šrėdersas bequest was an inspiration to Wollongong [to build an art gallery]'.⁷⁹¹ In 1978 the Wollongong City Gallery was opened, with the Šrėdersas collection as its nucleus. One section, housing a permanent display of the works he donated, is called the Bob

⁷⁸⁶ Kate Halley, the Šrėdersas Catalogue, Wollongong City Gallery, 1989.

⁷⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸⁸ Kate Halley, the Šrėdersas Catalogue, Wollongong City Gallery, 1989.

⁷⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁹⁰ Barbara Tuckermann, *ibid*

⁷⁹¹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 July 1976, p. 5

Šrēdersas Gallery and is the venue for an annual programme of lectures known as the Bob Sredersas Lectures.⁷⁹² Bronius Šrēdersas died in 1982.



⁷⁹² In 1987, the inaugural address was given by Daniel Thomas, director of the Art Gallery of South Australia; in 1988 Latvian painter Imants Tillers delivered the lecture; and in 1989 it was given by Professor Donald Horne, Chairman of the Australia Council.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

*What does freedom mean
 To one born free
 Who has never known its loss
 Or the loss of dear ones
 In the fight for freedom?
 He does not know its price.*

*What does freedom mean
 To one who has never prayed
 With the lips of the refugee...
 Who has never wept with longing for home?*

Aldona Prižgintaitė

(Translated from original Lithuanian)

It is now more than forty years since Lithuanian refugees, uprooted from their homeland by World War II, arrived in Australia. Most clung firmly in the early years to a belief that their period of exile would be brief and that it would not be necessary to establish a long-term commitment to Australia.

While still in European refugee camps in the immediate post-war period, Lithuanian community leaders predicted an imminent East-West confrontation and implanted in the minds of their fellow Lithuanians the strong hope that a return to their homeland was merely a matter of time. Political and cultural leaders stressed also the moral obligation of each person to preserve and pass on to future generations the traditions and culture of Lithuania. The preservation of the Lithuanian language was seen as of prime importance. The refugees' hopes that they would soon be able to return to their homeland helped to ease for many their strong feelings of guilt at having forsaken their country in its time of crisis. Most Lithuanians, regardless of social and educational background, arrived in Australia with strongly held hopes of return and with

staunch feelings of loyalty to Lithuanian traditions and prepared to wait out whatever time was necessary.

As political refugees, they valued highly the political safety which Australia offered. They saw here a land of freedom and affluence, largely unaffected by war, and were glad to be accepted, albeit with reserve, by most Australians. It should be emphasised that Lithuanians did not expect to be immediately embraced by a foreign country. On the contrary, conditioned by their contemptuous treatment by the Russians and Germans during the past years, they were pleasantly surprised by the absence of authoritarian demands. Issues of human rights and equal opportunity, heard later, were new and seemed like fiction to the refugees. Differences between the newcomers and Australians nevertheless soon became apparent: the language barrier, everyday customs, differing values and attitudes to work, all played their part in straining relationships. Perhaps most crucial was a reduced sense of self-confidence experienced by many Lithuanians, caused by their feelings of statelessness and general lack of status. Collective past and present experiences and feelings bound Lithuanians together and they formed close-knit communities with a network of associations and cultural groups. Community activities were motivated for the most part by 'linguistic nationalism',⁷⁹³ the desire to keep alive the national language and cultural traditions.

The pain of the loss of homeland was particularly strong in the early years after migration to Australia. Lithuanians in exile often expressed their longing to return, even 'on their knees'.⁷⁹⁴ Participation in community activities gave some consolation and provided opportunities

... for self-expression, gaining recognition and exercising influence. Above all, this stimulus represent[ed] the positive concern to maintain group -- and hence individual -- identity, to keep alive 'long and profound' traditions or, less consciously, simply to preserve continuity between past and present and so safeguard the individual's sense of personal location in time.⁷⁹⁵

With the passing of the years, however, the loss diminished, hope of return faded and the predictions of Lithuanian community leaders became less assuring. By the sixties most Lithuanians in Australia accepted that, although an East-West conflict which would free Lithuania was a likely eventuality, this was probably so far in the future that it would preclude the possibility of their permanent return to their home country. Even more dispiriting were fears that

⁷⁹³ Antanas J. van Reenan, *Lithuanian Diaspora Königsberg to Chicago*, University Press of America, New York, 1990, p. xv

⁷⁹⁴ This was a very commonly used expression by Lithuanians for many years after they came to Australia, however, it did not mean 'going back in contrition' but rather 'going back despite the difficulties encountered'.

⁷⁹⁵ Jean Martin, *Community and Identity*, Australian National University, Canberra, 1972, p. 133

Lithuanians were a dying race. Many were prompted by such anxiety and by their feelings of guilt to make contact⁷⁹⁶ with their relatives and friends still in Lithuania so that they could send help, both financial and cultural. This was often done at considerable personal sacrifice. Others in Australia became socially inactive and suffered depression to varying degrees. Although precise figures are not available, it is known that a small number here so greatly feared the Communist regime in Lithuania that they discontinued association with the Lithuanian community, sometimes anglicising their names in their efforts to conceal their identity and to merge more easily into Australian society.⁷⁹⁷

Contacts with Australians were made by most Lithuanians through employment and education and, sometimes, through marriage. In these ways, the will to listen to each other was born and, over time, Lithuanians increased their understanding of Australian ways of life. Old customs became modified and an acceptance and appreciation of life in Australia developed. Lithuanian celebrations became less elaborate; demonstrative self-expression gave way to more pragmatic activity, especially among second-generation Lithuanians who grew up in Australia. Almost all were influenced by both cultures and, according to individual personalities, selected various aspects of each. In contrast to their Australian peers, many of whom are politically apathetic, most second-generation Lithuanians are keenly politically aware and regard the Australian government as the protector of democracy and freedom.

By the end of the eighties, the complex economical and political situations in the USSR caused the sudden collapse of the Communist regime. Suddenly the opportunity arose for oppressed nations to be free from Soviet occupation. In Lithuania people were in ecstasy. When, on 11 March 1990 the Lithuanian Parliament declared an independent republic, Lithuanians in all parts of the world rejoiced. The immediate Soviet demand that the declaration be repealed met with firm resistance. President Vytautas Landsbergis repeated the words of the fourteenth-century Grand Duke Gediminas, 'Sooner will iron melt to wax and stone turn to water than we shall retreat'.⁷⁹⁸

Many Lithuanians in exile realised that the words used by Landsbergis showed that the romanticism and idealism of Lithuanians through the ages was still alive in Lithuania today. Although most Lithuanians in exile felt a sense of great achievement and were enthusiastic for Lithuania's future, critical voices were also heard. Most exiles had gained a broader knowledge of world politics and had developed a more realistic approach to life than they had had when they

⁷⁹⁶ Generally, this did not happen until after the death of Stalin in 1953. Foreign contacts prior to ca 1953-6 were considered to be, and in many cases indeed were, dangerous to the relatives and friends living in Lithuania.

⁷⁹⁷ Only in very exceptional cases did Lithuanians anglicise their names merely for convenience.

⁷⁹⁸ Vytautas Kavolis, 'The Second Lithuanian Revival: Culture as Performance', in *Lituanus*, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 56

left Lithuania. To some, Landsbergis's statement was 'dangerous, even foolhardy courage.'⁷⁹⁹ Many Lithuanians in Australia realised how different they had become from most still living in their homeland.

Lithuania's independent status has made it possible for all those in exile to return. But, far from an exodus from Australia, there have to date⁸⁰⁰ been only a very few elderly people return to live in Lithuania. Others have realised, many for the first time, that strong roots hold them to their adopted country. The feelings of loyalty and allegiance that once bound them to Lithuania now bind them firmly to Australia and Lithuania. The political refugees of over forty years ago have become loyal Australians, although still with strong emotional ties to Lithuania.

Even greater than the loss felt by ordinary refugees on arrival in Australia was that experienced by Lithuanian artists. Their sense of deprivation was not only of country but also of Lithuanian folk art and folklore which over time had been the primary sources of inspiration and had provided not only subject matter but also style and mood for visual interpretation. Many post-war migrant artists had had their artistic insecurity further increased by exposure in Germany to German Expressionism and French Post-impressionism.

In their early years in Australia Lithuanian artists were confronted by virile Australian and American *avant-garde* styles which also challenged their cultural legacy. Slowly, their approach to art began to change, traditional rigidity giving way to freer modes of expression. In Sydney, more than in other places, the Lithuanians embraced abstract and semi-abstract styles and, to varying degrees, their work assumed an international character. Such a development was probably inevitable and due in large measure to contemporary mass media which provided regular information about what was happening artistically at that time throughout the world. Lenton Parr comments: 'The result is that artists all over the world are working in styles that belong to no one country in particular, but to all'.⁸⁰¹

Because of this universality, it is often difficult to distinguish Lithuanian art and its elements from works of art produced by artists of other nations. Nevertheless, certain traits and attitudes, generally based on myth and legend, remain subconsciously in national collective memory for centuries and predispose slightly different reactions to Nature, life and death. Lithuanians came from a country which was the last in Europe to shed paganism and which, almost to the middle of this century, was largely an agricultural society. It is therefore not surprising that Lithuanian artists have retained more pre-Christian

⁷⁹⁹ *ibid*

⁸⁰⁰ October, 1992

⁸⁰¹ Lenton Parr, *Sculpture*, Longman, Melbourne, 1967, p. 4

sentiment in their ethos than have artists of other European countries where there are longer histories of Christianisation and urbanisation.

Unlike Lithuanian literature, Lithuanian art has never been defined. Assuming that Lithuanian-Australian artistic work is not an exception but, rather, a valid extension of Lithuanian art, it is possible to make certain inferences. The sampling of art work in this study suggests that it is predominantly anti-hedonistic and pantheistic with strong links to mythology. It has a meditative character and is richly endowed with symbolic meaning. Not surprisingly, these characteristics are most evident in the works of the first-generation artists.

Since it is largely anti-hedonistic, Lithuanian art does not generally portray lively or bacchanalian scenes or nude figures. Nor is a sense of humour often displayed. The anti-hedonistic attitude of most artists predetermines to a large extent not only their choice of subject matter but also tightness of composition and subdued colour scale. A noticeable feature of Lithuanian art is the rare portrayal of present realities concerning human activities and events. It seems that most Lithuanian artists prefer to dwell in the past and in mystery and are inclined to interpretation of myth and legend and mysterious life and death processes. Some artists transfer thought and feelings to cosmic spheres or make personal experience universal. In Lithuanian visual art, age-old traits find two-fold expression -- as symbols and as feeling -- in degree according largely to the length of individual artists' exposure to their Lithuanian cultural heritage and their particular predisposition.

The most prominent themes in Lithuanian art are Nature and human suffering. Nature is depicted as an awesome and overwhelming entity in the presence of which the existence of Man becomes of little significance. In abstract art Nature is often rendered as an omnipotent inner force, omnipresent and all-embracing.

Lithuanian art photographers also tend to be fascinated more with Nature than with human activity, current affairs or sensationalism. Photographer Olegas Truchanas was outstanding in his respect and reverence for Nature and his work portrays its awesomeness and grandeur. Two examples from among a great many are *The Crowns of the Mountains* (ill. 484) and *Sunrays on Lake Pedder* (ill. 488), both 1968. Truchanas believed that national policy should include the 'ideal of beauty'.⁸⁰² Photographer Karolis Podėnas is another who seeks to portray the sublimity of Nature. Two examples are *Far in the Field* (ill. 509) and *The Dunes* (ill. 510). Both Truchanas and Podėnas chose not to include images of Man in their representations of Nature, but on occasions, particularly in their depiction of

⁸⁰² Max Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*, p. 51

trees, there is an implied sense of temporality directed towards Man (ills. 479, 480 and 511).

Adelaide photographer Vytautas Vosylius shows his reverence for Nature in *Sunrise Over the Pacific* (ill. 363) as does second-generation art photographer Arūnas Klupšas in *Grain* (ill. 310). Both use the same theme -- sunrise -- and render it in similar ways, notwithstanding the difference in ages of the two artists. It is tempting to assume that the cultural factor can sometimes be stronger than the generation gap and that an inherited attitude to Nature and life is manifest in art in similar ways.

Some aspects of the mystery and grandeur of Nature which hold particular fascination for Lithuanian artists seem to be genesis and constant change. Themes of change are given expression in a number of ways: as the changing of the seasons, the passing of the hours or as movements of the sun, the planets or the stars. On the other hand, the mystery of invisible, subtle changes such as the unfolding of a leaf or bud also finds expression in Lithuanian art. Celestial as well as terrestrial themes are often interwoven with mythology and metaphysics. Natural entities such as trees or planets are either personified or regarded simply as extensions of an artist's thoughts and feelings. These notions can be identified in the work of artists such as Leonas Urbonas whose paintings are basically tumultuous investigations into the mysteries of the cosmos (ills. 97 to 104 and ill. 108) and of Man (ills. 105 and 106) to which he projects his own terrestrial discoveries. Although Jurgis Mikševičius shares this interest in cosmic forces, he shows it in a much more tranquil way, e.g. *The Unconditioned* (ill. 48). Aldolfas Jankus is also concerned with cosmic bodies, e.g. *Galaxy* (ill. 256) and *Comet* (ill. 257). Vytautas Šerelis dwells on metaphysics and mystery in his paintings *Elephant and Eyeball* (ill. 414) and *Monolith* (ill. 415). Ceramists Jolanta Janavičius in *Genesis* (ill. 116) and Eli Statulevičius in *Comet* (ill. 515) and *Directing Stardust* (ill. 516) interpret creation. Metaphysical questions concerning creation appear in Ieva Pocius's sculpture, *No Beginning and No End* (ill. 392) and concerning the beginning of Man in her *Adam Rising* (ill. 385) and *Rising Forms* (ill. 386). Kazys Kemežys deals with the same themes in his paintings, *Venture Into the Foreground* (ill. 454) and *Birth* (ill. 455).

It seems that in Lithuanian visual art, as in Lithuanian mythology, the presence of the sun is especially important. Although in the twentieth century Lithuania began to be urbanised and industrialised, folklore concerning the sun continued to be present in homes, kindergartens and schools in the form of songs, proverbs, children's plays and nursery rhymes. Even recently published Lithuanian elementary books contain pictures and short stories and verses about

the benevolence of Mother Sun (saulelė montinėlė). Such early psychological conditioning makes a lasting impression.

In contrast to sunny Australia, Lithuania is a land of generally cloudy, overcast skies. Interestingly, Australian landscape painters seldom use an image of the sun, while it is used very frequently by Lithuanian artists. In *Australian Painting* by Bernard Smith, for example, only one image of the sun appears among the 266 works depicted.⁸⁰³ Other illustrated art publications show a similar pattern.⁸⁰⁴

In many works by Lithuanian artists the image of the sun is rendered simply and explicitly; at other times metaphorically or, particularly in abstract art, as a suggestion in circular form. In a number of works by first-generation Lithuanian artists the sun is represented as a principal element of the subject matter: for example, Vaclovas Ratas uses the sun as his main subject matter in *Sunny Day* (ill. 62), *Frozen Sun* (ill. 63), *Luxuriant Space* (ill. 64), *North Pole* (ill. 65) and *Unattainable* (ill. 66). In his *Birds* monoprint series (ills. 67 and 68) the sun is of equal importance with the bird even though the title suggests the bird as the principal subject. Most of his woodcuts also have the symbol of the sun, although not as a principal entity, e.g. *Mother* (ill. 54), *Mimi* (ill. 58) and *Sonata* (ill. 61).

Henry Šalkauskas also frequently used the sun as an important symbol: sometimes explicitly as in *Behind is Always the Sun* (ill. 32); at other times more covertly as in *Search* (ill. 29), or metaphorically, as in *Harvest* (ill. 31). In many of his abstract works a circle, representing the sun, appears in a prominent compositional position.

Eva Kubbos's imagery is also often centred on the sun, as in *Morning Coming* (ill. 72), *After the Rain* (ill. 74) and *Call of Spring* (ill. 79). She portrays the sun as a circle or part-circle and endows it with various colours ranging from radiant gold to black. However, whatever the colour, the sun tends to be an overpowering and benevolent subject. Vida Kabaila's expressionistic landscapes employ the sun or its absence to create differing effects; in *Near Seaspray* (ill. 121), for example, the sun bursts with radiance while *Landscape in Ochre* (ill. 122) is sombre and dramatic because of the absence of sunlight.

⁸⁰³ This is *Sunset*, 1967, an abstract computerised rendering of the sun by Joseph Stanisław Ostojka-Kotkowski; David Davies' *Moonrise*, Templestowe, 1894, contains an image of the moon. John Langstaff's *The Arrival of Burke, Wills and King at the Deserted Camp at Cooper's Creek*, 1902-7 and Albert Tucker's *The Gamblers*, 1965, are ambiguous because the images depicted could be either a sun or moon.

⁸⁰⁴ In the sixty-five illustrations in *Australian Landscapes in Colour* by Ian Mudie, Rigby, Adelaide, undated, there is no reference to the sun or moon. *Landscapes 1955-1978* by J. Colin Angus, Craftsman Press, 1981 has thirty coloured plates but no symbol of a sun or moon appears. Among the 106 illustrations in *Australian Artists Today*, ed. Graeme Norris, Victoria, 1984 the only reference is to the moon and is in *Moonrise Over Faraday* by Robert Madden.

Adomas Vingis executes a burst of sunrays in his abstract work, *Sun* (ill. 246) and sculptor Vincas Jomantas transforms the traditional representation of sunrays into a cubistic fragmentation in *Sculpture* (ill. 195). The symbol of the sun is present in paintings by Juozas Baukus (Joseph Banks), e.g. *Breeze of Spring* (ill. 228) and *Communication* (ill. 229). Scenographer Paul Cleveland uses the sun's image metaphorically in *Flower* (ill. 209) where he blends the sun and a flower into one image.

In some works by second-generation Lithuanian artists the image of the sun is placed in the foreground. Rimas Keraitis's sculptures evolve around the presence of the sun, as in *Triumph of the Sun* (ill. 457), *Star Constellation* (ill. 458) and *Daughter of the Sun* (ill. 459). Nijolė Pengelley's landscapes are sometimes transformed into surrealist works by the overwhelming radiance of the sun as in *Sunburst* (ill. 288). Aurimas Dumčius's welded sculpture *Queblo Sunset* (ill. 398) displays the triumph of the sun. In contrast, Rimas Daugalis's *Memories* (ills. 396 and 397) show the enormity of the tragedy of fleeing in such a way that it overshadows the benevolence of the sun.

A number of artists pay homage to Mother Earth: these include Adolfas Jankus in *The First Furrow* (ill. 259) and *Grain* (ill. 258) and Jolanta Janavičius in her terra-cotta work, e.g. *Cylindrical Vase* (ill. 112), *Bark Vase* (ill. 114) and *Genesis* (ill. 116). By using unglazed clay and by imprinting patterns of leaves and seeds, Janavičius portrays Earth's gifts to Man.

As already mentioned, Lithuanian artists are also concerned with aspects of the constant changes in Nature such as sunrise and sunset, two themes especially favoured by art photographers. Painters render the changing of the days and seasons or the power of Nature in effecting such changes. Henry Šalkauskas uses these themes in *Edge of Spring* (ill. 36) and *God of Spring* (ill. 37). Eva Kubbos interprets the process of becoming and includes an image of the sun in *Morning Coming* (ill. 72) and *After the Rain* (ill. 74), only two examples of numerous works by Kubbos on this theme. In Adomas Vingis's work the process of creation is depicted in *Morning Comes Slowly* (ill. 248), *Keep the Sunset with You* (ill. 252) and his *Seasons* cycle, e.g. *Autumn* (ill. 244) and *Winter* (ill. 245).

Other artists show their fascination with the mystery of growth, e.g. Jurgis Reisgys in his sculptures *Flower of the Forest* (ill. 156) and *Flowers of the Mountains* (ill. 157) and second-generation ceramist Audronė Jurkšaitis in *The First Leaf* (ill. 152) and *Study of Growth* (ill. 153).

Lithuanian mythology has influenced many artists in both general and particular ways. Those influenced in a general way tend to display in their work more abstract notions in a characteristic Lithuanian ethos. Their subject matter is often oriented towards concepts of life, death, eternity and temporality, sacrifice

and suffering. Their work is permeated with lyricism, passivity or fatalism and demands to be meditated upon. Artists influenced by mythology in a particular way reproduce specific subject matter: gods and goddesses, myths and legends. In practice the division is not sharp and the ways often merge and reinforce each other.

The artist most influenced in a general way by Lithuanian mythology is probably Vincas Jomantas. His sculptures *Birds of Death* (ill. 197), *Meditators* (ill. 198), *Sacrifice 1* and *Sacrifice 2* (ills. 199 and 201), *Eternal Sailor* (ill. 205) and *Beacon* (ill. 207) ruminate symbolically on abstract concepts. Artists influenced in particular ways by Lithuanian mythology are more numerous. Foremost is probably Faustas Sadauskas. *Serpent* (ill. 305) and *Goddess* (ill. 306) are two of his many sculptures on this theme and are both representations of mythological entities. Rimas Kabaila, in the background of his *Calendar* (ill. 147), uses the mythological Tree of Life as the symbol of permanency and change. Linas Vaičiulevičius refers to mythology in his bronze sculpture *Drasia* (Spirit, ill. 494) which alludes to Rūpintojėlis as well as to the spirit of the god of flax, which symbolises suffering and annual resurrection. Robertas Gvildys's sculptures *Brother* (ill. 293) and *Life* (ill. 294) speak of spirits entrapped within stone and flora.

The dividing line between mythology and folklore is always thin but is especially so in Lithuanian art because of the frequent references to spiritual powers and entities. Folkloric influence is obvious in visual interpretations by many Lithuanian artists of myths, legends and beliefs. The legend of Eglė, the Queen of the Serpents, has been visually interpreted by several Lithuanian artists in Australia: Audronė Jurkšaitis (ill. 154), Eleonora Marčiulionis (ill. 358) and Ieva Pocius (not illustrated, see p. 298-9). The legend of Jūratė is depicted in works by Vaclovas Ratas (ill. 54), Daina Burnotas (ill. 166), Gražina Firinauskas (ill. 239) and Aleksandras Gabas (ill. 349). A folkloric influence is also evident in the work of second-generation artists Mindaugas Simankevičius, Kristina Vaičiulytė, Nijolė Bižys, Elena Zdanė and others.

Lithuanian folk art is the inspiration for some of the work of several second-generation artists. Direct quotations from Lithuanian folk art appear in works by Kristina Didclis (ill. 297), Elena Zdanė (ill. 266) and Eglė Klupšas (ill. 309). The historical past has motivated Danutė Karpavičius in some of her ceramics (ill. 129).

Probably more than any other first- or second-generation Lithuanian artist in Australia, Irena Sibley has adopted Lithuanian art in all its aspects: in the subject matter, style, media and feeling of her work. Although she has lived and worked with her husband, Australian artist Andrew Sibley, for over twenty years, her graphic art reflects nothing of his style. Her work, it seems, is based

largely on impressions gained in childhood from Lithuanian children's magazines (ills. 268 and 269; cf ill. 26).

Only a small number of artists, rather than drawing on the past use recent or contemporary Lithuanian issues. For example, only three artists in Australia have produced work which focuses on the common experience of Lithuanian refugees, i.e. of having to flee their homeland: Vaclovas Ratas in his woodcut *At the Crossroad* (ill. 57), Antanas Rūkštelė in his painting, *Refugees* (ill. 354) and Rimas Daugalis, a second-generation artist, in *Memories 1* and *Memories 2* (ills. 396 and 397). As far as the author can ascertain, these are the only works on this theme by Australian Lithuanian artists. Two sculptors of the second generation, however, have taken inspiration from recent Lithuanian issues: Linas Vaičiulevičius has produced a series of powerful sculptures on the theme of the odyssey of political dissident Simas (ills. 490-492, 495) and on other political questions (ill. 493); Dalia Antanaitis is also concerned with political issues in her sculptural installation *Thirteenth of January* (not illustrated). Cultural issues are also commented upon in her *Fragments of Čiurlionis* (ill. 273) and *Dream Unfulfilled in the Lucky Country* (ill. 275).

It is interesting to note that, even though works by Lithuanian artists are often of a meditative character and even though most Lithuanians are of Catholic faith, Christian themes are seldom used by either first- or second-generation artists. There have, of course, been a number of commissioned religious works: several versions of the Stations of the Cross were executed for Adelaide churches by painter Algirdas Kudirka, sculptor Ieva Pocius and folk artist Aloyzas Kviklys.

Some of the second-generation artists, educated in Australian Catholic Schools, commented in a satirical way about religion: for instance, *Pregnant Madonna* (ill. 471) by Veronika Kristensen; *Resurrection* (ill. 407) by Vytas Kapočiūnas; and *New Circus* (ill. 417) by Vytas Šerelis.

The many traditional images of saints, crosses and the Sorrowful God produced by folk artists have, in the Lithuanian context, significance that is probably more national than religious, as they combine pagan as well as Christian symbols.

Unlike the artists so far discussed, those classified in this study as Latecomers to Art rarely display a Lithuanian ethos. This is at first surprising since most had lived for a considerable time in Lithuania and had thus been exposed for a longer time to Lithuanian culture. Their art training, however, has been in Australian institutions and it is probably partly for this reason that their work reflects the styles and subject matter favoured by their Australian art

schools and instructors. In the work of some Latecomers, however, Lithuanian themes emerge. Sydney artist Daina Burnotas depicts legendary Lithuanian heroes in *Jūratė* (ill. 166) and her flower studies are stylised and decorative in the traditional Lithuanian manner; the work of Genovaite Kepalas who executes bold collages in glass and driftwood is also reminiscent of Lithuanian art. Two examples of Kepalas's work are *The Church on the Riverbank* (ill. 321) and *Eagle* (ill. 322).

From the works of art surveyed in this thesis, it is obvious that Lithuanian mythology, folklore and folk art have exerted considerable influence on subject matter, imagery and, to a lesser degree on architectonics and colour scale. The power of old beliefs and the conservatism of the Lithuanian people are also evident.

However one must raise the question how far these influences are conscious and deliberate; how far they arise unconsciously in the artists' works. In numerous conversations of the writer with first-generation artists their initial reaction to this question was one of great surprise. Usually their answer was, 'I have never thought about it'. There were, however, a few artists who denied strongly the Lithuanian influence. One was Teisutis Zikaras. Although most of his imagery stemmed from Lithuanian folk art, and although Australian art critics claimed to recognise his 'Lithuanianness' from the beginning of his artistic career in Australia, he was adamant that all his imagery and his manner of execution were entirely his own. Nor did portraitist Vladas Meškėnas see a Lithuanian influence in his work. He admitted that while painting the portrait of Sir William Dobell he had the image of Rūpintojėlis 'on his mind'. Nevertheless, he believes it did not influence the work.

Artists of the second generation seemed more consciously aware of their Lithuanian heritage. Some regarded it as an original, special source of their artistic inspiration. Sadauskas, Vaičiulevičius, Antanaitis, Bižys, Kabaila and Gvildys appear to feel a great need, perhaps even a commitment to use Lithuanian themes. Some have the ability to execute their work in the Lithuanian spirit.

From these examples it is tempting to conclude that culture and tradition acquired in childhood are difficult to shed. In most cases the Lithuanian heritage follows unconsciously like a shadow or stays like an accent in one's speech. On the other hand, it seems that, for those exposed to several cultures during childhood and adolescence, maintaining their parents' cultural legacy has often become a conscious choice.

As discussed earlier, Lithuanian artists in Australia have been exposed in varying degrees to a variety of influences and have matured as artists during their years in Australia. Those of the first generation, educated by Lithuanian

teachers, faced great challenges in coming to terms with contemporary art styles but, over time, usually modified and modernised their approaches. Although artists of the second generation received their art training in Australia, for most their Lithuanian cultural legacy formed a significant part of their upbringing. So it is that most work by Lithuanians of all ages has a quality that distinguishes it, even if at times only slightly, from that by artists of other countries. The image of the sun alone does not make a work of art Lithuanian. Nor does the representation of pre-Christian gods and goddesses. But the total of these images, their persistency, the lyrical mood of rendition, the subdued colour range and slow architectonics do endow Lithuanian art with special characteristics.

Lenton Parr describes Lithuanian art as 'reverberat[ing] ... the atmosphere with rumours of other times, other places, old and new'.⁸⁰⁵ This atmosphere has complemented mainstream Australian art and has had an influence, as has the work of other migrant artists, since the early fifties. Alan McCulloch was drawn in 1955 to comment, more generally, on the migrant influence: 'The highly developed tastes of hundreds of other New Australian artists have now affected every local field of artistic endeavour: in the first of the outdoor art exhibitions conducted by the Melbourne *Herald* in 1953, among the thousands of pictures by unknown artists represented, seventy per cent of those of outstanding quality were by New Australians'.⁸⁰⁶

Lithuanian artists have contributed to the Australian mainstream in specific ways. Most belong or have belonged to at least one Australian or international art association. Almost from the time of their arrival in Australia, artists of the Vanguard group became involved in art associations. Chief among the Vanguards in this respect were Vaclovas Ratas who belonged to the Contemporary Art Society of Australia and was a foundation member of the USA-based Lithuanian Institute of Art; and Henry Šalkauskas who was an executive committee member of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia. Lithuanian graphic artists in Sydney initiated the formation in 1961 of the Printmakers Society, a move which revived graphic art in Australia. Šalkauskas and Jurgis Mikševičius were foundation members of the Six Directions art group. Jolanta Janavičius was instrumental in the setting-up of a potters workshop for the Holroyd Arts and Crafts Society at Marylands and was the first teacher at the workshop. When in 1963 Šalkauskas and Eva Kubbos joined the Australian Watercolour Institute, their introduction of a new gestural approach to watercolour painting elevated it to an independent art form. Most Vanguard artists, particularly in Sydney, were supporters and proponents of Abstract Expressionism. Melbourne Vanguard sculptors Teisutis Zikaras and

⁸⁰⁵ Parr, in catalogue of exhibition of works by Vincas Jomantas, 1982.

⁸⁰⁶ Alan McCulloch, 'Migrant Artists in Australia', in *Meanjin*, Vol. 4, Dec. 1955, p. 515.

Vincas Jomantas were founding members of the Centre Five art group and vigorously promoted sculpture as an art form for both interior and exterior use. Their demonstrations of the sculpting process did much to develop awareness of its importance and to forge links between sculptors and architects.

Second-generation artists have also been involved in art organizations and administration. Eli Statulevičius was for several years secretary of the Gold Coast Potters Association; Rita Lazauskas is secretary of the Beechworth Arts Council; Mark Bartkevičius was a founding member of the Lipstick art photography group in Launceston.

It is interesting that the organizational activities noted have been linked to the Australian mainstream. Lithuanian art organizations have not enjoyed the same level of success, an example being the short-lived Aitvaras group in Sydney. In other Lithuanian communities no attempts at all were made to form organized visual art groups. Nevertheless, exhibitions have been held regularly, sometimes on the initiative of individual artists, at other times under the auspices of local Lithuanian Community Councils. In 1985 an enthusiastic response was given to the founding in Sydney by Genovaitė Kazokas of the Lithuanian Art and Craft Association which, for the first time in thirty-five years, brought together Lithuanian artists of both generations.

A number of Lithuanian artists have been formally employed as art teachers. These include, in New South Wales, Bižys, Gailiūnas, Giedraitytė, Jolanta Janavičius, Vida Kabaila, Keraitis, Kraucevičius, Kristensen, Mikševičius, Palaitis, Urbonas and Zakarauskas; in Victoria, Balsaitis, Gabriele Jomantas, Lazauskas, Liubinas, Padoms, Pengelley, Sasnaitis, Sibley and Zikaras; in South Australia, Dumčius, Dunda, Kapočiūnas, Pocius and Vilmanis; and in Queensland, Statulevičius.

Other artists have stimulated public interest in folk art, especially traditional Lithuanian crafts such as weaving and egg decoration, by voluntarily giving demonstrations at festivals, fairs and exhibitions. Prominent among these folk artists have been Petrė Čerakavičius, Janina Maželis, Eugenija Šimkus and Valentina Vens.

Within the Lithuanian community in Australia, the image of the artist retains an aura of nineteenth-century romanticism. The notion of 'divine inspiration' lingers even today. The respect for artists far outweighs that given, for example, to those successful in the business world. Practically the whole community takes pride in individual artistic achievement. Since its inception, *Mūsų Pastogė* has given prominence to news concerning art exhibitions and artists' successes.

Both solo and group exhibitions are always enthusiastically supported and well attended by Lithuanian community members who give moral as well as financial support to artists. Particularly high esteem has been accorded artists such as Ratas, Šimkūnas, Urbonas and Vaičaitis, who, in addition to producing works of art, have also written authoritatively on matters of art.

Decorative folk-art items, and to a lesser extent paintings, feature prominently in the homes of most Lithuanians in Australia, providing nostalgic reminders of homeland and cultural legacy. The more easily affordable folk-art items are given frequently as gifts. Even though paintings are more expensive and migrant families have had heavy personal and community financial commitments, artist Leonas Urbonas believes that art purchases by Lithuanians are proportionately greater than those by Australians.⁸⁰⁷ In the early years, the preferred choices were nostalgic landscapes; more recently, abstract paintings have become popular. The criterion for purchase has always been personal enjoyment rather than financial investment as the notion of investment is totally foreign to the Lithuanian psyche.

For many years Lithuania had no free contact with the outside world. The Communist regime decreed absolutely what was permissible in art; artists were employed by the State and materials, style and subject matter were prescribed. Only Socialist Realism glorifying the Party and portraying 'happy' Soviet citizens was acceptable. Even slight deviation from this prescription was likely to have serious consequences.

Only from the sixties did communication with the outside world become gradually possible. After a decade or so, during which letters were exchanged between relatives and friends in Australia and Lithuania, in 1975 the author gained permission from Soviet authorities to stage a public art exhibition in Vilnius. Despite opposition from conservative members of the Sydney Lithuanian community, Kazokas travelled to Lithuania with a collection of graphic works by Vaclovas Ratas. These were framed and exhibited at the State Gallery in Vilnius in August, 1975. Very little official publicity was given,⁸⁰⁸ but news of the exhibition spread by word of mouth and attendance was pleasing.

About the same time, painter Adomas Vingis raised money in Melbourne for the purchase of a number of contemporary graphic art reproductions and illustrated art books which were smuggled by various means to Lithuania.

⁸⁰⁷ As told on several occasions to the author by Leonas Urbonas.

⁸⁰⁸ The only official publicity appeared after the exhibition had closed.

During the eighties, with the easing of political censorship in Lithuania, art forms became less rigid, but it was not until 1990, following the regaining of Lithuania's independence, that the extent and severity of art stagnation in Lithuania became fully apparent.

A more recent development has been the efforts by artists to free art in Lithuania from the shackles of Socialist Realism. Results are already becoming visible: in 1992 an exhibition of graphic art from Lithuania was held at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The works demonstrated clear signs that personal interpretations of life and events are rapidly replacing the former programmes prescribed by the Soviets. The exhibition is further evidence of the strong cultural bridge extending from Australia to Lithuania. Lithuanian artists in Australia will no doubt continue to play an important part in increasing communication and understanding between Lithuania and Australia.

Although most Lithuanian artists are keenly interested in the artistic happenings in Lithuania, their principal concern is to continue to work on the Australian art scene. Since their arrival Lithuanian artists, in the same way as artists from other countries, have worked inconspicuously and without a spokesperson or a leader. Bernard Smith writes:

... the post-war migrant artists did not establish themselves as leaders of *avant-garde* movements. Leadership remained with the native-born but the migrant artists did much to change the climate of aesthetic opinion during the 1950s and 1960s. By taking up teaching posts at many levels -- in general education, in public and private art schools, in adult education -- they were able to educate a generation of Australians towards a more tolerant view of modern art, particularly abstract art'.⁸⁰⁹

Finally, perhaps it is possible to say that Lithuanian artists brought to Australia their cultural heritage but gained artistic maturity here. At the same time, Australia has gained a number of Lithuanian artists who, together with other migrant artists, have added a unique element to the cultural diversity that now exists in this country.

⁸⁰⁹ Smith, *Australian Painting*, Melbourne, 1971, p. 390

APPENDIX

SELECT LIST OF ARTISTS' EXHIBITIONS AND AWARDS

ROSEMARY ALIUKONIS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1974 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1985 Greenhill Galleries, Adelaide

JOINT EXHIBITION

- 1972 Contemporary Art Society Gallery, Adelaide (with Glenn Ash)

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1972 South Australian Contemporary Art Society Interstate Travelling Exhibition
 Royal South Australian Society of Arts Painting Exhibition.
 1973 Arts Festival Centre Opening, Adelaide
 1974 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Adelaide
 1975 International Women's Year Exhibition:
 Royal South Australian Society of Arts Gallery, Adelaide,
 and Galerie Schecke, Hamburg, Germany
 1977 SKA Radio Station *Life* Exhibition, Festival Centre, Adelaide
 1982 *War Babies*, Kensington Gallery, Adelaide
 1983 *Illustrators '83*, Kintore Gallery, Adelaide
 1986 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1988 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Adelaide

DALIA ANTANAITIS

SOLO EXHIBITION

- 1991 Swanston Street Gallery, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Student Exhibition
 1990 *Disclosures* Exhibition, Melbourne
In-tension Exhibition, Melbourne
 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney

AWARDS

- 1990 V and G Kazokas Sculpture Prize
 RMIT Union Arts Grant

IONAS BALSAITIS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (all at the Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne)

- 1970 *Image of Mind* painting series
 1972 *Metron* painting series
 1975 *Processed Process*: film
 1976 Drawings
 1977 *Space Time Structures*: film
 1978 *Artists in Schools* Painting Exhibition
 1981 Paintings
 1982 *Erratica*: film
 1985 Paintings
 1988 Paintings
 1989 Etchings
 1990 Paintings

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 *Recent Australian Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1975 *Artist Artists*, National Gallery of Victoria
 1976 *Project 9* (documentary film & video), Art Gallery of
 New South Wales *Innovation in Australian Film*, Australian
 Film Commission *Drawing Some Definitions*, George Paton
 Galleries, Melbourne, and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
 1978 *Pinacoteca at Watters*, Watters Gallery, Sydney
 1980 *Preston to Phillip*, Reconnaissance Gallery, Melbourne
 1982 *Seven Artists*, National Gallery of Victoria
 1986 *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, Hobart

REPRESENTED IN

National Gallery of Victoria
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 National Film Library, Canberra
 Australian Film Institute, Vincent Library
 Australian Film Commission
 Parliament House, Canberra

JUOZAS BAUKUS (JOSEPH BANKS)**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 1949 - Bathurst Migrant Reception Camp
 1962 - St. John's Hall, East Melbourne
 1972 - Geographic Institute Hall, Brisbane
 1983 - Lithuanian House, Sydney
 1984 - Lithuanian House, Adelaide

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Since 1963 - Regular contributor to Victorian Artists Society Exhibitions
 Since 1980 - Regular contributor to Lithuanian Days Exhibitions

PAUL CLEVELAND**TELEVISION DRAMA SET AND COSTUME DESIGN**

- 1961 *The Rivals*
 1964 *Martin Luther*
 1966 *Phoenix Too Frequent*
 1967 *Ride on a Big Dipper*
 1977 *Catspaw*
 1980 *Patchwork Hero*
 1981 *Come Midnight Monday*
 1986 *Fame and Misfortune*
 1988 *The Bartons*
 1989 *House Rules*
 Inside Running

TELEVISION DRAMA COSTUME DESIGN

- 1980 *Lucinda Brayford*
 1985 *One Summer Again*
 1991 *Embassy*

CHILDREN'S FANTASY TELEVISION SET DESIGN

- 1967-1972 *Adventure Island*

TELEVISION VARIETY PROGRAMME SET DESIGN

- 1962 *The Gershwin Years*
 Circus on Ice
 1963 *Arabian Ice Show*
 Beauty and the Beast
 1963-1964 *The World of Operetta*
 1968 *Johnny Hartman Show*

- 1972 *The Kamahl Show*
 1976 *The Perry Como Show*
Ginger Rogers Show

TELEVISION OPERA PRODUCTION DESIGN

- 1961 *Secret of Susannah*
 1962 *La Serva Padrona*
 1964 *Martha*
 1969 *The Marriage Contract*

TELEVISION BALLET PRODUCTION DESIGN

- 1962 *Swan Lake*
Bolga
 1963 *The Sentimental Bloke*
Peer Gynt

STAGE OPERA SET DESIGN

- 1969 *Orpheus and Eurydice*
Secret Marriage
 1971 *Cossi Fan Tutte*
Secret of Susannah

SIGITAS GABRIE

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 Ewing Gallery, University of Melbourne
 1975, 1976, 1977,
 1981 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1974 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
 1975 19th Tasmanian Art Gallery Purchase Competition, Hobart
Four Painters, Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
Spring Festival of Drawing, Mornington Peninsula Arts
 Centre
 1976 *Australian Printmakers*, Print Council of Australia
 1977 *The Money Show*, Ewing Gallery, University of Melbourne
 1978 Mildura Sculpture Triennial
 LaTrobe University Sculpture Festival
 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
 Mitchell Foundation Exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria
 1981 First Australian Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne
 1988 *Contemporary Art Spaces Exhibition*, Chameleon Gallery,
 Hobart
Exile Artists' Exhibition, Lithuanian National Art Gallery,
 Vilnius, Lithuania
Outgrowing Assimilation? Centre for the Arts Gallery,
 Hobart
 1990 *Backyards and Beyond*, Irving Benson Gallery, La Trobe
 Library, Melbourne

AWARDS

- 1978 Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre Print Prize
 1979 Henry Worland Print Prize, Warrnambool

REPRESENTED IN

National Gallery, Canberra
 Monash University Collection
 Western Australian Institute of Technology
 Burwood State College
 Philip Morris Collection
 LaTrobe University Collection
 Visual Arts Board Collection
 Queensland Art Gallery

Frankston State College
 Mitchell Foundation Collection, National Gallery of Victoria
 National Bank Print Collection
 Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre Collection
 Vilnius State Gallery, Lithuania
 Australian Embassy, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
 Foreign Affairs Department, Canberra
 Parliament House, Canberra

JOLANTA JANAVIČIUS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (Overseas)

1970 International Ceramics Exhibition, Vallauris, France
 1972, 1976 International Ceramics Exhibition, Faenza, Italy
 1979 Sloane Street Gallery, London
 1980 Leisure Centre, Stevenage, England
 1984 Park Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (Australia)

1970 Helen McEwan Gallery, Sydney
 1972 Gallery 16, Sydney
 1973 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1974, 1975
 & 1976 Old Bakery Gallery, Sydney
 1977 Potters Gallery, Sydney
 1978 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
 1981 Kensington Gallery, Adelaide
 Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney
 1982 Bonython Gallery, Adelaide
 Gallery 176, Sydney
 1983 Sculpture Centre, Sydney
 1984 Manuka Gallery, Canberra
 Bloomfield Gallery, Sydney
 1985 Nerang Gallery, Surfers Paradise
 Cook's Hill Gallery, Newcastle

REPRESENTED IN

South Australian Art Gallery, Adelaide
 Von Bertouch Gallery, Newcastle
 Art Gallery of Rockhampton, Queensland
 International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy
 Collection of the Government of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

ADOLFAS JANKUS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1972 Hawthorn Gallery, Victoria
 1973 Southlands Shopping Centre, Melbourne
 1974 Open House Exhibition, Melbourne

JOINT EXHIBITION

1972 Golden Age Gallery, Brighton, Victoria (with painter
 Angela Tucker)

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Since 1969 Regular exhibitor: Victorian Artists Society Exhibitions;
 Lithuanian Days Exhibitions; and
Herald Outdoor Art Shows
 1970 Toorak Gallery, Melbourne

IRENA JOKUBAUSKAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1976 Lithuanian House, Adelaide
 1985, 1988 Lithuanian House, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 Victorian Art Society Exhibition, North Melbourne Gallery
 1977 Ethnic Festival of Arts Exhibition, Melbourne
 1982 Bright (Vic.) Painting Exhibition
 1983 Altona Hoechst Art Competition
 Grampians Painting Safari Exhibition
 1986 Altona Rotary Club Art Competition, Melbourne
 1988 Paynesville Craggs Safari Exhibition

AWARDS

- Ethnic Festival of Arts Exhibition

VINCAS JOMANTAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1967, 1974
 & 1976 Rudy Komon Gallery, Sydney
 1976 Crossley Gallery, Melbourne
 1982 *Retrospective 1962-1982*, Royal Melbourne Institute
 of Technology Gallery, Melbourne
 1990 *Vincas Jomantas: Sculpture*, McClelland Gallery, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1956 Contemporary Art Society Exhibition, Melbourne
 1957 Peter Bray Gallery, Melbourne
 1958 Brummel Gallery, Melbourne
Survey I, National Gallery of Victoria
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition, Melbourne
 1959 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
Six Sculptors Exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria
 1961 Mildura Sculpture Exhibition
 Commonwealth Exhibition, Musee Rodin, Paris
 1963 Newcastle City Art Gallery
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 1964 Hungry Horse Gallery, Sydney
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Commonwealth Travelling Sculpture Exhibition
 1965 Centre 5, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Young Australian Painters Commonwealth Exhibition, Tokyo
 Georges Gallery, Melbourne
 1966 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1968 Commonwealth Travelling Exhibition, New Zealand
 Baltic Art Exhibition, White Studio Gallery, Adelaide
 1972 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1973 *The Cairnmiller Institute*, Georges Gallery, Melbourne
 Centre 5, Geelong Art Gallery
 Centre 5, McClelland Gallery, Melbourne
 1979 Rudy Komon Gallery, Sydney
 1984 Centre 5, Heide Gallery, Melbourne
 1987 *Third Australian Sculpture Triennial*, Mildura
Contemporary Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery,
 National Gallery of Victoria, Saitama, Japan

AWARDS

- 1964 Mildura Sculpture Triennial Award
 1968 Comalco Award for Sculpture

REPRESENTED IN

Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Newcastle City Art Gallery
 Mildura Art Gallery
 McClelland Art Gallery, Melbourne

COMMISSIONS

Australian National University, Canberra: Outdoor Sculpture (bronze), Physics Building courtyard; Wall Sculpture (wood), Forestry School.
 Monash University, Clayton, Victoria: Designed Walls (concrete), Alexander Theatre auditorium.
 Australian Chancery, Washington DC, USA: Sculptural Screen (aluminium).
 State Government Offices, Melbourne; Coat of Arms (aluminium).
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Two Screens (aluminium).
 Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney: Free-standing Sculpture (Stainless steel).
 Eagle House, Melbourne: Wall Sculpture (aluminium).
 Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand: Free-standing Sculpture (bronze).

VIDA KABAILA**SOLO EXHIBITION**

1980 Curlionis Art Gallery, Chicago

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1957 *Spring Exhibition*, Victorian Artists Society, Melbourne
Herald Outdoor Art Show, Melbourne
 1958 *Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, Melbourne
 1959, 1960
 & 1962 *Herald Outdoor Art Show*, Melbourne
 1964 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Melbourne
 1967, 1968 Hunters Hill Exhibition, Sydney
 1978 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1984 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Canberra
 1988 *Lithuanian Artists Abroad* Exhibition, Vilnius, Lithuania

VYTAS KAPOČIŪNAS**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

1963 Lithuanian House, Adelaide
 1965, 1966 North Adelaide Galleries
 1967 Ansdell Gallery, London
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1968 Nundah Gallery, Canberra
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1969 Munster Arms Gallery, Melbourne
 Man Yung Gallery, Melbourne
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1970 Derek Hunt Galleries, Perth
 1973 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1975 Osborne Art Gallery, Adelaide
 1980 Contemporary Art Society Exhibition, Adelaide

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Between 1965 and 1977 participated in Group Exhibitions at the following galleries:

Art Gallery of South Australia
 Art Gallery of Victoria

North Adelaide Galleries
 Hamilton Gallery, Victoria
 Mercury Gallery, London
 Tasmanian Art Gallery
 Osborne Art Gallery
 Llewellyn Art Gallery
 Lidums Gallery, South Australia
 Print Council of Australia
 Horizon '72 Te Awamutu Festival, New Zealand
 Albury Art Gallery
 Newcastle City Art Centre
 Contemporary Art Society of South Australia
 Alice Springs Art Foundation
 Royal South Australian Society of Artists Exhibition
 Playhouse Gallery, Festival Centre, Adelaide
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Bonython-Meadmore Galleries, Adelaide
 Elder Fine Art Galleries, South Australia
 Tynte Gallery, South Australia

GRAŽINA KATAUSKAS

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1979, 1980 *Collection of Knots*, Macrame Association of Canberra
 Exhibition, Canberra Theatre Gallery
 1981, 1982 *The Originals*, Macrame Association of Canberra, A.C.T. Craft
 Centre, Canberra
 1982 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Melbourne
 1983, 1984 Macrame and Fibrecraft Exhibition, Strathnairn Gallery,
 Canberra
 1984 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Canberra
 1986, 1992 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney

DIANNE KERAITIS

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1968, 1969 Christmas Invitation Exhibition, Blaxland Galleries, Sydney
 1969 London Gallery, Queenbeyan
Survey 9, Blaxland Galleries, Sydney
 1970 Currabubula Art Prize Exhibition
 1975 Drummoyne Municipal Art Society Exhibition
 1983 Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
 1984 Robin Hood Art Competition, Sydney

AWARDS

- 1970 Currabubula Art Prize, NSW
 1975 Drummoyne Exhibition Prize, Sydney
 1984 Robin Hood Art Competition, Sydney

DANIUS KESMINAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS, SITE WORKS AND INSTALLATIONS

- 1988 *Fire Sculpture*, Park Street, Abbotsford, Melbourne
 1989 *Romas Kalanta Memorial Fire Sculpture*, Collingwood,
 Melbourne
 1990 Painting and Sculpture Exhibition, Gold Street Gallery,
 Melbourne
 1991 *Fire Line*, Fire Sculpture, Vilnius, Lithuania
New York Consequence, Fire Sculpture, New York
Postcards: A Travelogue, Gold Street Gallery, Melbourne
Incendiary, Fire Sculpture, Carlton, Melbourne

ESTABLISHMENT OF LITHUANIAN HOUSE

In 1969 Fr. Bačinskas provided funding for the purchase of a house at 192 Montague Road, West End, for community use.⁷⁷³ Members of the local Lithuanian community renovated the building so that it would be suitable for rehearsals, meetings and commemorative celebrations. In order to facilitate the legal transfer of the property from private to community ownership, to oversee its administration and to promote cultural activities, the Father Bačinskas Lithuanian Association Incorporated was established in 1986. Civil engineer Kazys Bagdonas has been president of the association since its inception.⁷⁷⁴

LITHUANIAN ARTISTS IN BRISBANE

Only one Lithuanian artist is known to live in Brisbane. Ceramist, painter and teacher **Eli Statulevičius**⁷⁷⁵ was born on 19 September 1950 to Jonas and Marta Statulevičius at the Greta (NSW) migrant reception camp. After completing her secondary education she worked for six years as a laboratory assistant and for three years was self-employed in a garden nursery. Her interest in the humanities led her to study at the University of Queensland. In 1979 she graduated with bachelors degrees in both Arts and Divinity and in 1991 was awarded a Diploma of Social Science by the University of New England (Armidale, NSW). She is currently completing a Bachelors Honours degree in Psychology at the University of Queensland.

After her 1979 graduation Statulevičius became actively interested in ceramics. She says that, encouraged by the positive response of others, in 1985 she undertook a six-month course in sculpture at the Southport College of Technical and Further Education. In 1986, she completed a course in stoneware glazing at the Flying Arts School in Brisbane. From the beginning of her career as a ceramist she says she had a desire to earn a living from it but this did not eventuate.

Statulevičius's ceramics are executed with classical restraint and serenity, their form controlled with precision and their glazes and decoration applied with clarity and austerity. In the early eighties her work was mainly functional and included cups, saucers, pots and vases. She also produced small sculptural figurines and clay jewellery. At that time, she was striving for control of the medium and for perfection of form. From about 1984, she began to

⁷⁷³ Petras Bačinskas, *ibid.* p. 211

⁷⁷⁴ From Bagdonas letter, 23 Sept. 1992.

⁷⁷⁵ Bio/cd details received in letters to author, 1991.

concentrate on decorative aspects as a means of incorporating her philosophical interests and ideas. *Decanter and Vase*, 1985 (ill. 514), is an example of her work of this period. Both items, rendered in carefully controlled form, have smooth black surfaces with cobalt-chrome glaze. Their sparse, gold-line ornamentation is reminiscent of pre-Christian, mythological symbols.

Her most imposing works are hand-painted plates which may be regarded as tondo paintings in ceramics. Two examples are *Comet* (ill. 515) and *Directing Stardust* (ill. 516), both 1985. These are self-contained, abstract paintings with symbols connoting heavenly bodies. In each, the asymmetrical design is clear and restrained, leaving large areas of atmospheric space in which the comets and stars are placed. The restricted colour scheme helps to create an overall impression of classical harmony. In the late eighties Statulevičius's interests turned to painting which at first she regarded as recreation. She admired the Impressionist painters for their jubilant colour softness and these qualities are embodied in her watercolour painting, *Flowers*, 1990 (ill. 517).

Statulevičius participates regularly in exhibitions and competitions in Queensland. She is a past secretary of the Gold Coast Potters Association, has taught pottery at the Association's Pottery School in Brisbane and at the Southport Special School, and conducts a monthly pottery group at the Majella House Women's Refuge on the Gold Coast.

Neither Eli Statulevičius nor her parents have been involved in Lithuanian community activities in Brisbane.

LITHUANIANS IN BEECHWORTH

It is known that in 1949 a Lithuanian Association was formed by a group of Lithuanian males living in Beechworth, Victoria.⁷⁷⁶ Records show that the Association still existed in 1953 when Lithuanians combined with Estonians and Latvians in a commemorative service to mark the anniversary of the 1941 Soviet deportation of Baltic people to Siberia.⁷⁷⁷ There is no information after that time, probably because after completing their work contracts most men moved to larger Lithuanian centres.

In the middle seventies however, painter, photographer and art teacher Rita Lazauskas,⁷⁷⁸ a second-generation Lithuanian moved to Beechworth and

⁷⁷⁶ The exact number is not known but was presumably about twenty.

⁷⁷⁷ *Menašitis*, Vol. 1, p. 181

⁷⁷⁸ Biog/ed details given by the artist in letter dated 19 Feb. 1992.

practises there as an artist as well as being active in local Australian community affairs.

Lazauskas was born to Edvardas and Elija Lazauskas in Adelaide on 16 December 1958. During her childhood she participated in many Lithuanian activities: she belonged to the Lithuanian Scouts Organization; she was a student, later a teacher, at the Lithuanian weekend school; and she was a member of the folk-dance group. She was encouraged to draw by her mother who painted collages.

After completing study at St. Aloysius College, Adelaide, in 1975, she began to travel with her husband Bruce Derrick, eventually settling at Beechworth in Victoria. In 1982 her son Seth was born. In 1984 she enrolled at the Riverina-Murray Institute in Albury and in 1987 gained an Associate Diploma in Visual Arts, having majored in painting. In 1989 she was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) degree from Charles Sturt University. During her studies she became particularly interested in medieval, baroque and surrealist art, especially that of Mexicans Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo.

Lazauskas's art is figurative and surrealistic and she generally features a single, dominant figure, often with an imaginative, panoramic background. She writes, 'The sources of inspiration for my work are history and mythology -- and, in particular, where the two overlap. I aim to combine the richness and theatricality of Baroque and Medieval Art with the freedom and complexity of Surrealism and metaphysical painting'. In some of her paintings the principal figure, although dominant, is restrained and often pensive, e.g. *Self-portrait as a Lithuanian*, 1990 (ill. 518). She explains, 'The globe of the universe or crystal ball is a surrealist element ... perhaps indicating Lithuania's uncertain future'. Her other paintings are remote from everyday life, e.g. *Self-portrait as a Gardener*, 1990 (ill. 519) in which she exhibits a florid, rococo-like treatment of the figure in illusionistic space. The surrealist element, the heavenly cage, gives a sense of splendour and serenity.

Lazauskas participates in local art exhibitions and since 1983 has been an active member of the Beechworth Arts Council and is the current secretary. Since 1987 she has conducted a Life Drawing programme at the Beechworth Secretarial College and an Arts programme at the local Art Community Centre. In 1989 she was a tutor in painting at Technical and Further Education classes in Wangaratta and at the Beechworth Training Prison. During the Yackandandah Folk Dance Festival in the same year she conducted a Lithuanian Folkdance Workshop.

LITHUANIANS IN WOLLONGONG

In 1948 the first Lithuanians arrived to work at the Port Kembla steelworks and settled mainly in nearby Wollongong. By 1952, the number of Lithuanians living there was about two hundred.⁷⁷⁹ In 1953, the Wollongong Lithuanian Community Council was formed with Matas Gailiūnas (1918-1992) its first and long-serving president. The Community Council regularly organized Lithuanian national and religious commemorative events and in 1955 established a weekend school which operated for a year. It has been the only council in Australia to celebrate the traditional Lithuanian Day of the Sea (Jūros diena). This is attended also by compatriots from Sydney.⁷⁸⁰

Over the years many Lithuanians moved from Wollongong. By the seventies community activities had declined but several younger Lithuanians had become involved in organizations across the wider community: Rūta Mataitis, for example, was active not only in the Community Council but also in the Ethnic Council, the Grants Allocation Committee, the Migrant Resource Centre and as a member of the Advisory Committee on Arts to the NSW Premier. In 1972 she was awarded the Order of Australia medal, General Division, for service to the community.

The Wollongong Lithuanian community has produced one painter, Sigita Gailiūnas and one art collector, Bronius Šrėdersas.

Painter and art teacher Sigita Gailiūnas⁷⁸¹ was born on 1 November 1958 in Bulli, NSW and grew up by the sea in a district where mining was the main industry. Her parents were Bronė and Matas Gailiūnas. Her father was a former Lithuanian agriculturalist and became president of the Wollongong Lithuanian Community Council. She remembers that her first artistic inspiration came from her early childhood when she used to watch her mother carving miniature birds and animals. Sigita attended Corrimal High School where her artistic talent was encouraged. In 1974, while still at high school, she won first prize in a design competition held by the Wollongong City Council for a mural on a mining theme. Her work, measuring 50 metres by one-and-a-half metres was painted at the Crown Central Shopping Complex.

In 1977 she began art studies at the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney, and while there won the Festival of Wollongong Art Poster competition. After graduation in 1979, she gained a

⁷⁷⁹ Matas Gailiūnas in *Metraštis*, Vol. 1, p. 283

⁷⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁷⁸¹ Biographical details recorded in interview with the artist 14 Feb. 1988.

Diploma of Education from Sydney Teachers College in the following year, and has taught art at high schools in the Wollongong-Port Kembla area since 1981. Following a visit to Lithuania in 1982, she has participated regularly in Lithuanian art exhibitions.

Gailiūnas's work consists of representational seascapes, landscapes and cityscapes and shows an impressionist influence. She prefers either to use an open composition or to give a 'bird's-eye view', and renders her images in light, muted colours with smooth brush application. Her inspiration comes from her immediate surroundings: *Steelworks Magic*, 1979 (ill. 520), for example, depicts the play of smoke above the factory chimneys. There is never an image of Man in her paintings, although his presence is implied. In her seascapes, she celebrates the spirit of the sea and the seashore, emphasising a peaceful atmosphere, as in *Sunday*, 1983 (ill. 521) and *Tide*, 1985 (ill. 522).

Bronius Šrėdersas (1910-1982, see ill. 523)⁷⁸² a steelworker who was also an art collector, left his art treasures, currently valued at over a million dollars, to the City of Wollongong. The collection was amassed during his twenty-five years of working at the Port Kembla Steelworks and consists mainly of works by Australian masters. Included are paintings by Nicolas Chevalier, Rupert Bunny, Anthony Dattilo-Rubbo, Arthur Streeton, John William Ashton, Julian Ashton, Hans Heysen, Roland Wakelin, Jack Carrington-Smith, Grace Crossington-Smith, Pro Hart, Thomas Gleghorn, Michael Kmit, James Gleeson, the Lindsays, Margaret Preston and others. The Art Gallery catalogue of the collection lists eighty-seven paintings, eleven folk-art pieces from New Guinea, thirty-one items of fine china and five miniatures (see ill. 524).

Šrėdersas was born on 4 December 1910 in the resort city of Simferopol situated on the shore of the Black Sea on the Crimea Peninsula where, presumably, at the time the Šrėdersas family was on holiday. His parents, Maksimilijonas and Ona Marija Šrėdersas, were wealthy landowners from the Lithuanian county of Ukmergė. Because of the turmoil which followed the Russian Revolution, they were not able to return to independent Lithuania until 1925. In 1933 Bronius Šrėdersas completed his high school education at Ukmergė. His art teacher there had been Eugenijus Kulvietis (1883-1959), a realist painter who emphasised colour harmony, stylisation and classical, sober composition in his paintings (ill. 22). In later life, Šrėdersas often talked about the paintings he remembered in his parents' home where many forms of artistic expression had been greatly appreciated. As far as is known, some were also practised: his father was a 'Sunday painter' and both father and son restored

⁷⁸² Information gained in interviews, Dec. 1989 with Rūta Mataitis, Matas Gailiūnas, President of the Australian Lithuanian Community Council of Wollongong and Barbara Tuckerman, Director of the Wollongong City Gallery.

and rejuvenated oil paintings. Surviving letters and the memories of compatriots reveal Bronius Šrėdersas to have been a gentle, diligent perfectionist, fluent in spoken and written Lithuanian and in Russian, Polish, French and German.

In 1935 Šrėdersas was employed by the Department of Security in Kaunas. Later, he was transferred to Vilnius where he was working when the Soviets occupied Lithuania in 1940. Fearing political danger, Šrėdersas left Vilnius and worked in disguise as a seaman on the steamboat *Liūtas* (Lion) on the River Nemunas. It seems that during the German occupation that followed he continued to work on the boat and kept a low profile.

In 1944 he fled to the West, arriving at a displaced persons camp in Flensburg in Germany, close to the border with Denmark. In 1950, Šrėdersas migrated to Australia 'with nothing'⁷⁸³ and began a two-year work contract at Port Kembla Steelworks. Because, he said, his neighbours and workmates 'couldn't pronounce his Lithuanian name, Bronius',⁷⁸⁴ they called him Bob and this form of address became usual. Matas Gailiūnas recalls Šrėdersas's visits to community meetings where he preferred always to be seated inconspicuously at the back of the room. In the early years of the arrival of Lithuanians in Australia, there were some twenty or thirty young, unmarried Lithuanian men working in the mines, most of whom formed a 'brotherhood' and spent time drowning their sorrows in hotels. However, Šrėdersas did not seek their company; neither did he become very involved in community activities, preferring always to be a 'loner'. It seems that his way of escaping loneliness, the dusty work and the rowdy company of his workfellows was to retreat to the aesthetic world to which he had been accustomed in his childhood and youth. The images from a more harmonious world must have provided some compensation for the depressing reality in which he lived.

In 1956, having built a modest fibro cottage in Cringila, a suburb of Port Kembla where 'forty percent of the population is non-English speaking',⁷⁸⁵ Šrėdersas bought his first painting at auction in Sydney. He described the purchase to student Karen Lateo: 'I saw one painting, a watercolour. They asked for this painting five pounds to start. Nobody wanted. Three pounds -- nobody. Two pounds -- nobody. One guinea. This painting for one guinea I can buy. I raise my hand. And I bought my first painting. I looked, -- Syd Long -- who is this artist? I went to the New South Wales Art Gallery and I found this Syd Long there in the gallery. Oh my goodness! It 'means it is possible to buy here good paintings for a song, for pennies. So I

⁷⁸³ Šrėdersas often used this phrase to describe his arrival in Australia.

⁷⁸⁴ Paddy Ginnane, *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 July 1976, p. 5

⁷⁸⁵ Alderman Harold Hansen, *ibid*

start to collect'.⁷⁸⁶ The labourer from the steelworks had bought his first painting, *Herring Fleet at Sea* by Sydney Long.

Wollongong artist Nina Oliver, from whom he bought another painting, visited his home in the sixties and describes what she saw: 'Every wall was covered with paintings, from ceiling to floor, even the kitchen. There were wonderful paintings propped up behind the stove, on a shelf above the toilet, under the bed. The furniture was sparse -- a table and two wooden chairs, linoleum on the floor. But you could not see the walls; there was no space between the paintings.'⁷⁸⁷

A major reason for collecting seems to have been Šrėdersas's enjoyment of the beauty which art provides. He said, 'Recognising beauty is the important thing.'⁷⁸⁸ His purchases were limited by the availability of works of art at auction rooms and by his financial resources and he bought only what he liked and what he could relate to his own experiences. Thus, his collection consisted mainly of realistic, romantic works -- a reflection of the kinds of paintings that had adorned Lithuanian estate houses in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The subject matter, too, related to what he had seen in his younger days -- romantic landscapes -- and in his later years as a migrant -- working men, industrial sites and 'ordinary', working-class people.

There are no abstract or modern paintings, probably because they had no place in his memories of Lithuania. However, in the late fifties Šrėdersas began to buy New Guinea folk-art items, perhaps reflecting an appreciation of folk art gained from his Lithuanian schooling.

In 1975 Šrėdersas retired and, in 1976, made a bequest to the people of Wollongong, donating his collection (with the exception of a print of the Lithuanian coat of arms) as a gesture of thanks. After twenty-five years in his adopted country, feelings of gratitude for the political security and freedom which Australia provided had largely replaced his former feelings of humiliation and degradation. Šrėdersas said, 'The most important thing in life is freedom'.⁷⁸⁹ The paintings, he said, were '... for the young people to learn, for old people to enjoy, and for me it is the realisation of a life's dedication'.⁷⁹⁰

The local press reported that 'the Šrėdersas bequest was an inspiration to Wollongong [to build an art gallery]'.⁷⁹¹ In 1978 the Wollongong City Gallery was opened, with the Šrėdersas collection as its nucleus. One section, housing a permanent display of the works he donated, is called the Bob

⁷⁸⁶ Kate Halley, the Šrėdersas Catalogue, Wollongong City Gallery, 1989.

⁷⁸⁷ *ibid*

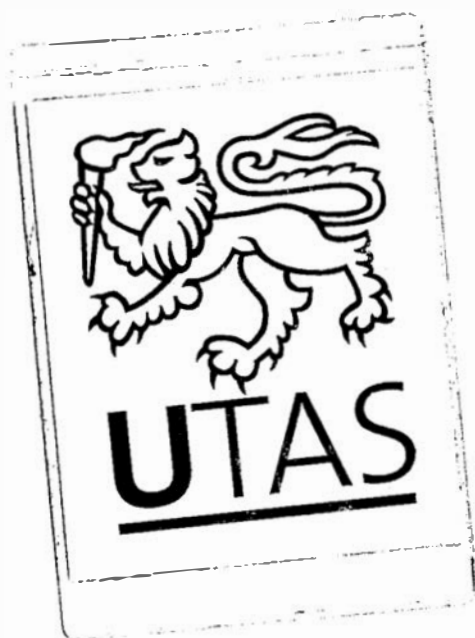
⁷⁸⁸ Kate Halley, the Šrėdersas Catalogue, Wollongong City Gallery, 1989.

⁷⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁹⁰ Barbara Tuckermann, *ibid*

⁷⁹¹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 28 July 1976, p. 5

Šrēdersas Gallery and is the venue for an annual programme of lectures known as the Bob Sredersas Lectures.⁷⁹² Bronius Šrēdersas died in 1982.



⁷⁹² In 1987, the inaugural address was given by Daniel Thomas, director of the Art Gallery of South Australia; in 1988 Latvian painter Imants Tillers delivered the lecture; and in 1989 it was given by Professor Donald Horne, Chairman of the Australia Council.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

*What does freedom mean
 To one born free
 Who has never known its loss
 Or the loss of dear ones
 In the fight for freedom?
 He does not know its price.*

*What does freedom mean
 To one who has never prayed
 With the lips of the refugee...
 Who has never wept with longing for home?*

Aldona Prižgintaitė

(Translated from original Lithuanian)

It is now more than forty years since Lithuanian refugees, uprooted from their homeland by World War II, arrived in Australia. Most clung firmly in the early years to a belief that their period of exile would be brief and that it would not be necessary to establish a long-term commitment to Australia.

While still in European refugee camps in the immediate post-war period, Lithuanian community leaders predicted an imminent East-West confrontation and implanted in the minds of their fellow Lithuanians the strong hope that a return to their homeland was merely a matter of time. Political and cultural leaders stressed also the moral obligation of each person to preserve and pass on to future generations the traditions and culture of Lithuania. The preservation of the Lithuanian language was seen as of prime importance. The refugees' hopes that they would soon be able to return to their homeland helped to ease for many their strong feelings of guilt at having forsaken their country in its time of crisis. Most Lithuanians, regardless of social and educational background, arrived in Australia with strongly held hopes of return and with

staunch feelings of loyalty to Lithuanian traditions and prepared to wait out whatever time was necessary.

As political refugees, they valued highly the political safety which Australia offered. They saw here a land of freedom and affluence, largely unaffected by war, and were glad to be accepted, albeit with reserve, by most Australians. It should be emphasised that Lithuanians did not expect to be immediately embraced by a foreign country. On the contrary, conditioned by their contemptuous treatment by the Russians and Germans during the past years, they were pleasantly surprised by the absence of authoritarian demands. Issues of human rights and equal opportunity, heard later, were new and seemed like fiction to the refugees. Differences between the newcomers and Australians nevertheless soon became apparent: the language barrier, everyday customs, differing values and attitudes to work, all played their part in straining relationships. Perhaps most crucial was a reduced sense of self-confidence experienced by many Lithuanians, caused by their feelings of statelessness and general lack of status. Collective past and present experiences and feelings bound Lithuanians together and they formed close-knit communities with a network of associations and cultural groups. Community activities were motivated for the most part by 'linguistic nationalism',⁷⁹³ the desire to keep alive the national language and cultural traditions.

The pain of the loss of homeland was particularly strong in the early years after migration to Australia. Lithuanians in exile often expressed their longing to return, even 'on their knees'.⁷⁹⁴ Participation in community activities gave some consolation and provided opportunities

... for self-expression, gaining recognition and exercising influence. Above all, this stimulus represent[ed] the positive concern to maintain group -- and hence individual -- identity, to keep alive 'long and profound' traditions or, less consciously, simply to preserve continuity between past and present and so safeguard the individual's sense of personal location in time.⁷⁹⁵

With the passing of the years, however, the loss diminished, hope of return faded and the predictions of Lithuanian community leaders became less assuring. By the sixties most Lithuanians in Australia accepted that, although an East-West conflict which would free Lithuania was a likely eventuality, this was probably so far in the future that it would preclude the possibility of their permanent return to their home country. Even more dispiriting were fears that

⁷⁹³ Antanas J. van Reenan, *Lithuanian Diaspora Königsberg to Chicago*, University Press of America, New York, 1990, p. xv

⁷⁹⁴ This was a very commonly used expression by Lithuanians for many years after they came to Australia, however, it did not mean 'going back in contrition' but rather 'going back despite the difficulties encountered'.

⁷⁹⁵ Jean Martin, *Community and Identity*, Australian National University, Canberra, 1972, p. 133

Lithuanians were a dying race. Many were prompted by such anxiety and by their feelings of guilt to make contact⁷⁹⁶ with their relatives and friends still in Lithuania so that they could send help, both financial and cultural. This was often done at considerable personal sacrifice. Others in Australia became socially inactive and suffered depression to varying degrees. Although precise figures are not available, it is known that a small number here so greatly feared the Communist regime in Lithuania that they discontinued association with the Lithuanian community, sometimes anglicising their names in their efforts to conceal their identity and to merge more easily into Australian society.⁷⁹⁷

Contacts with Australians were made by most Lithuanians through employment and education and, sometimes, through marriage. In these ways, the will to listen to each other was born and, over time, Lithuanians increased their understanding of Australian ways of life. Old customs became modified and an acceptance and appreciation of life in Australia developed. Lithuanian celebrations became less elaborate; demonstrative self-expression gave way to more pragmatic activity, especially among second-generation Lithuanians who grew up in Australia. Almost all were influenced by both cultures and, according to individual personalities, selected various aspects of each. In contrast to their Australian peers, many of whom are politically apathetic, most second-generation Lithuanians are keenly politically aware and regard the Australian government as the protector of democracy and freedom.

By the end of the eighties, the complex economical and political situations in the USSR caused the sudden collapse of the Communist regime. Suddenly the opportunity arose for oppressed nations to be free from Soviet occupation. In Lithuania people were in ecstasy. When, on 11 March 1990 the Lithuanian Parliament declared an independent republic, Lithuanians in all parts of the world rejoiced. The immediate Soviet demand that the declaration be repealed met with firm resistance. President Vytautas Landsbergis repeated the words of the fourteenth-century Grand Duke Gediminas, 'Sooner will iron melt to wax and stone turn to water than we shall retreat'.⁷⁹⁸

Many Lithuanians in exile realised that the words used by Landsbergis showed that the romanticism and idealism of Lithuanians through the ages was still alive in Lithuania today. Although most Lithuanians in exile felt a sense of great achievement and were enthusiastic for Lithuania's future, critical voices were also heard. Most exiles had gained a broader knowledge of world politics and had developed a more realistic approach to life than they had had when they

⁷⁹⁶ Generally, this did not happen until after the death of Stalin in 1953. Foreign contacts prior to ca 1953-6 were considered to be, and in many cases indeed were, dangerous to the relatives and friends living in Lithuania.

⁷⁹⁷ Only in very exceptional cases did Lithuanians anglicise their names merely for convenience.

⁷⁹⁸ Vytautas Kavolis, 'The Second Lithuanian Revival: Culture as Performance', in *Lituanus*, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 56

left Lithuania. To some, Landsbergis's statement was 'dangerous, even foolhardy courage.'⁷⁹⁹ Many Lithuanians in Australia realised how different they had become from most still living in their homeland.

Lithuania's independent status has made it possible for all those in exile to return. But, far from an exodus from Australia, there have to date⁸⁰⁰ been only a very few elderly people return to live in Lithuania. Others have realised, many for the first time, that strong roots hold them to their adopted country. The feelings of loyalty and allegiance that once bound them to Lithuania now bind them firmly to Australia and Lithuania. The political refugees of over forty years ago have become loyal Australians, although still with strong emotional ties to Lithuania.

Even greater than the loss felt by ordinary refugees on arrival in Australia was that experienced by Lithuanian artists. Their sense of deprivation was not only of country but also of Lithuanian folk art and folklore which over time had been the primary sources of inspiration and had provided not only subject matter but also style and mood for visual interpretation. Many post-war migrant artists had had their artistic insecurity further increased by exposure in Germany to German Expressionism and French Post-impressionism.

In their early years in Australia Lithuanian artists were confronted by virile Australian and American *avant-garde* styles which also challenged their cultural legacy. Slowly, their approach to art began to change, traditional rigidity giving way to freer modes of expression. In Sydney, more than in other places, the Lithuanians embraced abstract and semi-abstract styles and, to varying degrees, their work assumed an international character. Such a development was probably inevitable and due in large measure to contemporary mass media which provided regular information about what was happening artistically at that time throughout the world. Lenton Parr comments: 'The result is that artists all over the world are working in styles that belong to no one country in particular, but to all'.⁸⁰¹

Because of this universality, it is often difficult to distinguish Lithuanian art and its elements from works of art produced by artists of other nations. Nevertheless, certain traits and attitudes, generally based on myth and legend, remain subconsciously in national collective memory for centuries and predispose slightly different reactions to Nature, life and death. Lithuanians came from a country which was the last in Europe to shed paganism and which, almost to the middle of this century, was largely an agricultural society. It is therefore not surprising that Lithuanian artists have retained more pre-Christian

⁷⁹⁹ *ibid*

⁸⁰⁰ October, 1992

⁸⁰¹ Lenton Parr, *Sculpture*, Longman, Melbourne, 1967, p. 4

sentiment in their ethos than have artists of other European countries where there are longer histories of Christianisation and urbanisation.

Unlike Lithuanian literature, Lithuanian art has never been defined. Assuming that Lithuanian-Australian artistic work is not an exception but, rather, a valid extension of Lithuanian art, it is possible to make certain inferences. The sampling of art work in this study suggests that it is predominantly anti-hedonistic and pantheistic with strong links to mythology. It has a meditative character and is richly endowed with symbolic meaning. Not surprisingly, these characteristics are most evident in the works of the first-generation artists.

Since it is largely anti-hedonistic, Lithuanian art does not generally portray lively or bacchanalian scenes or nude figures. Nor is a sense of humour often displayed. The anti-hedonistic attitude of most artists predetermines to a large extent not only their choice of subject matter but also tightness of composition and subdued colour scale. A noticeable feature of Lithuanian art is the rare portrayal of present realities concerning human activities and events. It seems that most Lithuanian artists prefer to dwell in the past and in mystery and are inclined to interpretation of myth and legend and mysterious life and death processes. Some artists transfer thought and feelings to cosmic spheres or make personal experience universal. In Lithuanian visual art, age-old traits find two-fold expression -- as symbols and as feeling -- in degree according largely to the length of individual artists' exposure to their Lithuanian cultural heritage and their particular predisposition.

The most prominent themes in Lithuanian art are Nature and human suffering. Nature is depicted as an awesome and overwhelming entity in the presence of which the existence of Man becomes of little significance. In abstract art Nature is often rendered as an omnipotent inner force, omnipresent and all-embracing.

Lithuanian art photographers also tend to be fascinated more with Nature than with human activity, current affairs or sensationalism. Photographer Olegas Truchanas was outstanding in his respect and reverence for Nature and his work portrays its awesomeness and grandeur. Two examples from among a great many are *The Crowns of the Mountains* (ill. 484) and *Sunrays on Lake Pedder* (ill. 488), both 1968. Truchanas believed that national policy should include the 'ideal of beauty'.⁸⁰² Photographer Karolis Podėnas is another who seeks to portray the sublimity of Nature. Two examples are *Far in the Field* (ill. 509) and *The Dunes* (ill. 510). Both Truchanas and Podėnas chose not to include images of Man in their representations of Nature, but on occasions, particularly in their depiction of

⁸⁰² Max Angus, *The world of Olegas Truchanas*, p. 51

trees, there is an implied sense of temporality directed towards Man (ills. 479, 480 and 511).

Adelaide photographer Vytautas Vosylius shows his reverence for Nature in *Sunrise Over the Pacific* (ill. 363) as does second-generation art photographer Arūnas Klupšas in *Grain* (ill. 310). Both use the same theme -- sunrise -- and render it in similar ways, notwithstanding the difference in ages of the two artists. It is tempting to assume that the cultural factor can sometimes be stronger than the generation gap and that an inherited attitude to Nature and life is manifest in art in similar ways.

Some aspects of the mystery and grandeur of Nature which hold particular fascination for Lithuanian artists seem to be genesis and constant change. Themes of change are given expression in a number of ways: as the changing of the seasons, the passing of the hours or as movements of the sun, the planets or the stars. On the other hand, the mystery of invisible, subtle changes such as the unfolding of a leaf or bud also finds expression in Lithuanian art. Celestial as well as terrestrial themes are often interwoven with mythology and metaphysics. Natural entities such as trees or planets are either personified or regarded simply as extensions of an artist's thoughts and feelings. These notions can be identified in the work of artists such as Leonas Urbonas whose paintings are basically tumultuous investigations into the mysteries of the cosmos (ills. 97 to 104 and ill. 108) and of Man (ills. 105 and 106) to which he projects his own terrestrial discoveries. Although Jurgis Mikševičius shares this interest in cosmic forces, he shows it in a much more tranquil way, e.g. *The Unconditioned* (ill. 48). Aldolfas Jankus is also concerned with cosmic bodies, e.g. *Galaxy* (ill. 256) and *Comet* (ill. 257). Vytautas Šerelis dwells on metaphysics and mystery in his paintings *Elephant and Eyeball* (ill. 414) and *Monolith* (ill. 415). Ceramists Jolanta Janavičius in *Genesis* (ill. 116) and Eli Statulevičius in *Comet* (ill. 515) and *Directing Stardust* (ill. 516) interpret creation. Metaphysical questions concerning creation appear in Ieva Pocius's sculpture, *No Beginning and No End* (ill. 392) and concerning the beginning of Man in her *Adam Rising* (ill. 385) and *Rising Forms* (ill. 386). Kazys Kemežys deals with the same themes in his paintings, *Venture Into the Foreground* (ill. 454) and *Birth* (ill. 455).

It seems that in Lithuanian visual art, as in Lithuanian mythology, the presence of the sun is especially important. Although in the twentieth century Lithuania began to be urbanised and industrialised, folklore concerning the sun continued to be present in homes, kindergartens and schools in the form of songs, proverbs, children's plays and nursery rhymes. Even recently published Lithuanian elementary books contain pictures and short stories and verses about

the benevolence of Mother Sun (saulelė montinėlė). Such early psychological conditioning makes a lasting impression.

In contrast to sunny Australia, Lithuania is a land of generally cloudy, overcast skies. Interestingly, Australian landscape painters seldom use an image of the sun, while it is used very frequently by Lithuanian artists. In *Australian Painting* by Bernard Smith, for example, only one image of the sun appears among the 266 works depicted.⁸⁰³ Other illustrated art publications show a similar pattern.⁸⁰⁴

In many works by Lithuanian artists the image of the sun is rendered simply and explicitly; at other times metaphorically or, particularly in abstract art, as a suggestion in circular form. In a number of works by first-generation Lithuanian artists the sun is represented as a principal element of the subject matter: for example, Vaclovas Ratas uses the sun as his main subject matter in *Sunny Day* (ill. 62), *Frozen Sun* (ill. 63), *Luxuriant Space* (ill. 64), *North Pole* (ill. 65) and *Unattainable* (ill. 66). In his *Birds* monoprint series (ills. 67 and 68) the sun is of equal importance with the bird even though the title suggests the bird as the principal subject. Most of his woodcuts also have the symbol of the sun, although not as a principal entity, e.g. *Mother* (ill. 54), *Mimi* (ill. 58) and *Sonata* (ill. 61).

Henry Šalkauskas also frequently used the sun as an important symbol: sometimes explicitly as in *Behind is Always the Sun* (ill. 32); at other times more covertly as in *Search* (ill. 29), or metaphorically, as in *Harvest* (ill. 31). In many of his abstract works a circle, representing the sun, appears in a prominent compositional position.

Eva Kubbos's imagery is also often centred on the sun, as in *Morning Coming* (ill. 72), *After the Rain* (ill. 74) and *Call of Spring* (ill. 79). She portrays the sun as a circle or part-circle and endows it with various colours ranging from radiant gold to black. However, whatever the colour, the sun tends to be an overpowering and benevolent subject. Vida Kabaila's expressionistic landscapes employ the sun or its absence to create differing effects; in *Near Seaspray* (ill. 121), for example, the sun bursts with radiance while *Landscape in Ochre* (ill. 122) is sombre and dramatic because of the absence of sunlight.

⁸⁰³ This is *Sunset*, 1967, an abstract computerised rendering of the sun by Joseph Stanisław Ostojka-Kotkowski; David Davies' *Moonrise*, Templestowe, 1894, contains an image of the moon. John Langstaff's *The Arrival of Burke, Wills and King at the Deserted Camp at Cooper's Creek*, 1902-7 and Albert Tucker's *The Gamblers*, 1965, are ambiguous because the images depicted could be either a sun or moon.

⁸⁰⁴ In the sixty-five illustrations in *Australian Landscapes in Colour* by Ian Mudie, Rigby, Adelaide, undated, there is no reference to the sun or moon. *Landscapes 1955-1978* by J. Colin Angus, Craftsman Press, 1981 has thirty coloured plates but no symbol of a sun or moon appears. Among the 106 illustrations in *Australian Artists Today*, ed. Graeme Norris, Victoria, 1984 the only reference is to the moon and is in *Moonrise Over Faraday* by Robert Madden.

Adomas Vingis executes a burst of sunrays in his abstract work, *Sun* (ill. 246) and sculptor Vincas Jomantas transforms the traditional representation of sunrays into a cubistic fragmentation in *Sculpture* (ill. 195). The symbol of the sun is present in paintings by Juozas Baukus (Joseph Banks), e.g. *Breeze of Spring* (ill. 228) and *Communication* (ill. 229). Scenographer Paul Cleveland uses the sun's image metaphorically in *Flower* (ill. 209) where he blends the sun and a flower into one image.

In some works by second-generation Lithuanian artists the image of the sun is placed in the foreground. Rimas Keraitis's sculptures evolve around the presence of the sun, as in *Triumph of the Sun* (ill. 457), *Star Constellation* (ill. 458) and *Daughter of the Sun* (ill. 459). Nijolė Pengelley's landscapes are sometimes transformed into surrealist works by the overwhelming radiance of the sun as in *Sunburst* (ill. 288). Aurimas Dumčius's welded sculpture *Queblo Sunset* (ill. 398) displays the triumph of the sun. In contrast, Rimas Daugalis's *Memories* (ills. 396 and 397) show the enormity of the tragedy of fleeing in such a way that it overshadows the benevolence of the sun.

A number of artists pay homage to Mother Earth: these include Adolfas Jankus in *The First Furrow* (ill. 259) and *Grain* (ill. 258) and Jolanta Janavičius in her terra-cotta work, e.g. *Cylindrical Vase* (ill. 112), *Bark Vase* (ill. 114) and *Genesis* (ill. 116). By using unglazed clay and by imprinting patterns of leaves and seeds, Janavičius portrays Earth's gifts to Man.

As already mentioned, Lithuanian artists are also concerned with aspects of the constant changes in Nature such as sunrise and sunset, two themes especially favoured by art photographers. Painters render the changing of the days and seasons or the power of Nature in effecting such changes. Henry Šalkauskas uses these themes in *Edge of Spring* (ill. 36) and *God of Spring* (ill. 37). Eva Kubbos interprets the process of becoming and includes an image of the sun in *Morning Coming* (ill. 72) and *After the Rain* (ill. 74), only two examples of numerous works by Kubbos on this theme. In Adomas Vingis's work the process of creation is depicted in *Morning Comes Slowly* (ill. 248), *Keep the Sunset with You* (ill. 252) and his *Seasons* cycle, e.g. *Autumn* (ill. 244) and *Winter* (ill. 245).

Other artists show their fascination with the mystery of growth, e.g. Jurgis Reisgys in his sculptures *Flower of the Forest* (ill. 156) and *Flowers of the Mountains* (ill. 157) and second-generation ceramist Audronė Jurkšaitis in *The First Leaf* (ill. 152) and *Study of Growth* (ill. 153).

Lithuanian mythology has influenced many artists in both general and particular ways. Those influenced in a general way tend to display in their work more abstract notions in a characteristic Lithuanian ethos. Their subject matter is often oriented towards concepts of life, death, eternity and temporality, sacrifice

and suffering. Their work is permeated with lyricism, passivity or fatalism and demands to be meditated upon. Artists influenced by mythology in a particular way reproduce specific subject matter: gods and goddesses, myths and legends. In practice the division is not sharp and the ways often merge and reinforce each other.

The artist most influenced in a general way by Lithuanian mythology is probably Vincas Jomantas. His sculptures *Birds of Death* (ill. 197), *Meditators* (ill. 198), *Sacrifice 1* and *Sacrifice 2* (ills. 199 and 201), *Eternal Sailor* (ill. 205) and *Beacon* (ill. 207) ruminate symbolically on abstract concepts. Artists influenced in particular ways by Lithuanian mythology are more numerous. Foremost is probably Faustas Sadauskas. *Serpent* (ill. 305) and *Goddess* (ill. 306) are two of his many sculptures on this theme and are both representations of mythological entities. Rimas Kabaila, in the background of his *Calendar* (ill. 147), uses the mythological Tree of Life as the symbol of permanency and change. Linas Vaičiulevičius refers to mythology in his bronze sculpture *Drasia* (Spirit, ill. 494) which alludes to Rūpintojėlis as well as to the spirit of the god of flax, which symbolises suffering and annual resurrection. Robertas Gvildys's sculptures *Brother* (ill. 293) and *Life* (ill. 294) speak of spirits entrapped within stone and flora.

The dividing line between mythology and folklore is always thin but is especially so in Lithuanian art because of the frequent references to spiritual powers and entities. Folkloric influence is obvious in visual interpretations by many Lithuanian artists of myths, legends and beliefs. The legend of Eglė, the Queen of the Serpents, has been visually interpreted by several Lithuanian artists in Australia: Audronė Jurkšaitis (ill. 154), Eleonora Marčiulionis (ill. 358) and Ieva Pocius (not illustrated, see p. 298-9). The legend of Jūratė is depicted in works by Vaclovas Ratas (ill. 54), Daina Burnotas (ill. 166), Gražina Firinauskas (ill. 239) and Aleksandras Gabas (ill. 349). A folkloric influence is also evident in the work of second-generation artists Mindaugas Simankevičius, Kristina Vaičiulytė, Nijolė Bižys, Elena Zdanė and others.

Lithuanian folk art is the inspiration for some of the work of several second-generation artists. Direct quotations from Lithuanian folk art appear in works by Kristina Didelis (ill. 297), Elena Zdanė (ill. 266) and Eglė Klupšas (ill. 309). The historical past has motivated Danutė Karpavičius in some of her ceramics (ill. 129).

Probably more than any other first- or second-generation Lithuanian artist in Australia, Irena Sibley has adopted Lithuanian art in all its aspects: in the subject matter, style, media and feeling of her work. Although she has lived and worked with her husband, Australian artist Andrew Sibley, for over twenty years, her graphic art reflects nothing of his style. Her work, it seems, is based

largely on impressions gained in childhood from Lithuanian children's magazines (ills. 268 and 269; cf ill. 26).

Only a small number of artists, rather than drawing on the past use recent or contemporary Lithuanian issues. For example, only three artists in Australia have produced work which focuses on the common experience of Lithuanian refugees, i.e. of having to flee their homeland: Vaclovas Ratas in his woodcut *At the Crossroad* (ill. 57), Antanas Rūkštelė in his painting, *Refugees* (ill. 354) and Rimas Daugalis, a second-generation artist, in *Memories 1* and *Memories 2* (ills. 396 and 397). As far as the author can ascertain, these are the only works on this theme by Australian Lithuanian artists. Two sculptors of the second generation, however, have taken inspiration from recent Lithuanian issues: Linas Vaičiulevičius has produced a series of powerful sculptures on the theme of the odyssey of political dissident Simas (ills. 490-492, 495) and on other political questions (ill. 493); Dalia Antanaitis is also concerned with political issues in her sculptural installation *Thirteenth of January* (not illustrated). Cultural issues are also commented upon in her *Fragments of Čiurlionis* (ill. 273) and *Dream Unfulfilled in the Lucky Country* (ill. 275).

It is interesting to note that, even though works by Lithuanian artists are often of a meditative character and even though most Lithuanians are of Catholic faith, Christian themes are seldom used by either first- or second-generation artists. There have, of course, been a number of commissioned religious works: several versions of the Stations of the Cross were executed for Adelaide churches by painter Algirdas Kudirka, sculptor Ieva Pocius and folk artist Aloyzas Kviklys.

Some of the second-generation artists, educated in Australian Catholic Schools, commented in a satirical way about religion: for instance, *Pregnant Madonna* (ill. 471) by Veronika Kristensen; *Resurrection* (ill. 407) by Vytas Kapočiūnas; and *New Circus* (ill. 417) by Vytas Šerelis.

The many traditional images of saints, crosses and the Sorrowful God produced by folk artists have, in the Lithuanian context, significance that is probably more national than religious, as they combine pagan as well as Christian symbols.

Unlike the artists so far discussed, those classified in this study as Latecomers to Art rarely display a Lithuanian ethos. This is at first surprising since most had lived for a considerable time in Lithuania and had thus been exposed for a longer time to Lithuanian culture. Their art training, however, has been in Australian institutions and it is probably partly for this reason that their work reflects the styles and subject matter favoured by their Australian art

schools and instructors. In the work of some Latecomers, however, Lithuanian themes emerge. Sydney artist Daina Burnotas depicts legendary Lithuanian heroes in *Jūratė* (ill. 166) and her flower studies are stylised and decorative in the traditional Lithuanian manner; the work of Genovaite Kepalas who executes bold collages in glass and driftwood is also reminiscent of Lithuanian art. Two examples of Kepalas's work are *The Church on the Riverbank* (ill. 321) and *Eagle* (ill. 322).

From the works of art surveyed in this thesis, it is obvious that Lithuanian mythology, folklore and folk art have exerted considerable influence on subject matter, imagery and, to a lesser degree on architectonics and colour scale. The power of old beliefs and the conservatism of the Lithuanian people are also evident.

However one must raise the question how far these influences are conscious and deliberate; how far they arise unconsciously in the artists' works. In numerous conversations of the writer with first-generation artists their initial reaction to this question was one of great surprise. Usually their answer was, 'I have never thought about it'. There were, however, a few artists who denied strongly the Lithuanian influence. One was Teisutis Zikaras. Although most of his imagery stemmed from Lithuanian folk art, and although Australian art critics claimed to recognise his 'Lithuanianness' from the beginning of his artistic career in Australia, he was adamant that all his imagery and his manner of execution were entirely his own. Nor did portraitist Vladas Meškėnas see a Lithuanian influence in his work. He admitted that while painting the portrait of Sir William Dobell he had the image of Rūpintojėlis 'on his mind'. Nevertheless, he believes it did not influence the work.

Artists of the second generation seemed more consciously aware of their Lithuanian heritage. Some regarded it as an original, special source of their artistic inspiration. Sadauskas, Vaičiulevičius, Antanaitis, Bižys, Kabaila and Gvildys appear to feel a great need, perhaps even a commitment to use Lithuanian themes. Some have the ability to execute their work in the Lithuanian spirit.

From these examples it is tempting to conclude that culture and tradition acquired in childhood are difficult to shed. In most cases the Lithuanian heritage follows unconsciously like a shadow or stays like an accent in one's speech. On the other hand, it seems that, for those exposed to several cultures during childhood and adolescence, maintaining their parents' cultural legacy has often become a conscious choice.

As discussed earlier, Lithuanian artists in Australia have been exposed in varying degrees to a variety of influences and have matured as artists during their years in Australia. Those of the first generation, educated by Lithuanian

teachers, faced great challenges in coming to terms with contemporary art styles but, over time, usually modified and modernised their approaches. Although artists of the second generation received their art training in Australia, for most their Lithuanian cultural legacy formed a significant part of their upbringing. So it is that most work by Lithuanians of all ages has a quality that distinguishes it, even if at times only slightly, from that by artists of other countries. The image of the sun alone does not make a work of art Lithuanian. Nor does the representation of pre-Christian gods and goddesses. But the total of these images, their persistency, the lyrical mood of rendition, the subdued colour range and slow architectonics do endow Lithuanian art with special characteristics.

Lenton Parr describes Lithuanian art as 'reverberat[ing] ... the atmosphere with rumours of other times, other places, old and new'.⁸⁰⁵ This atmosphere has complemented mainstream Australian art and has had an influence, as has the work of other migrant artists, since the early fifties. Alan McCulloch was drawn in 1955 to comment, more generally, on the migrant influence: 'The highly developed tastes of hundreds of other New Australian artists have now affected every local field of artistic endeavour: in the first of the outdoor art exhibitions conducted by the Melbourne *Herald* in 1953, among the thousands of pictures by unknown artists represented, seventy per cent of those of outstanding quality were by New Australians'.⁸⁰⁶

Lithuanian artists have contributed to the Australian mainstream in specific ways. Most belong or have belonged to at least one Australian or international art association. Almost from the time of their arrival in Australia, artists of the Vanguard group became involved in art associations. Chief among the Vanguards in this respect were Vaclovas Ratas who belonged to the Contemporary Art Society of Australia and was a foundation member of the USA-based Lithuanian Institute of Art; and Henry Šalkauskas who was an executive committee member of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia. Lithuanian graphic artists in Sydney initiated the formation in 1961 of the Printmakers Society, a move which revived graphic art in Australia. Šalkauskas and Jurgis Mikševičius were foundation members of the Six Directions art group. Jolanta Janavičius was instrumental in the setting-up of a potters workshop for the Holroyd Arts and Crafts Society at Marylands and was the first teacher at the workshop. When in 1963 Šalkauskas and Eva Kubbos joined the Australian Watercolour Institute, their introduction of a new gestural approach to watercolour painting elevated it to an independent art form. Most Vanguard artists, particularly in Sydney, were supporters and proponents of Abstract Expressionism. Melbourne Vanguard sculptors Teisutis Zikaras and

⁸⁰⁵ Parr, in catalogue of exhibition of works by Vincas Jomantas, 1982.

⁸⁰⁶ Alan McCulloch, 'Migrant Artists in Australia', in *Meanjin*, Vol. 4, Dec. 1955, p. 515.

Vincas Jomantas were founding members of the Centre Five art group and vigorously promoted sculpture as an art form for both interior and exterior use. Their demonstrations of the sculpting process did much to develop awareness of its importance and to forge links between sculptors and architects.

Second-generation artists have also been involved in art organizations and administration. Eli Statulevičius was for several years secretary of the Gold Coast Potters Association; Rita Lazauskas is secretary of the Beechworth Arts Council; Mark Bartkevičius was a founding member of the Lipstick art photography group in Launceston.

It is interesting that the organizational activities noted have been linked to the Australian mainstream. Lithuanian art organizations have not enjoyed the same level of success, an example being the short-lived Aitvaras group in Sydney. In other Lithuanian communities no attempts at all were made to form organized visual art groups. Nevertheless, exhibitions have been held regularly, sometimes on the initiative of individual artists, at other times under the auspices of local Lithuanian Community Councils. In 1985 an enthusiastic response was given to the founding in Sydney by Genovaitė Kazokas of the Lithuanian Art and Craft Association which, for the first time in thirty-five years, brought together Lithuanian artists of both generations.

A number of Lithuanian artists have been formally employed as art teachers. These include, in New South Wales, Bižys, Gailiūnas, Giedraitytė, Jolanta Janavičius, Vida Kabaila, Keraitis, Kraucevičius, Kristensen, Mikševičius, Palaitis, Urbonas and Zakarauskas; in Victoria, Balsaitis, Gabriele Jomantas, Lazauskas, Liubinas, Padoms, Pengelley, Sasnaitis, Sibley and Zikaras; in South Australia, Dumčius, Dunda, Kapociūnas, Pocius and Vilmanis; and in Queensland, Statulevičius.

Other artists have stimulated public interest in folk art, especially traditional Lithuanian crafts such as weaving and egg decoration, by voluntarily giving demonstrations at festivals, fairs and exhibitions. Prominent among these folk artists have been Petrė Čerakavičius, Janina Maželis, Eugenija Šimkus and Valentina Vens.

Within the Lithuanian community in Australia, the image of the artist retains an aura of nineteenth-century romanticism. The notion of 'divine inspiration' lingers even today. The respect for artists far outweighs that given, for example, to those successful in the business world. Practically the whole community takes pride in individual artistic achievement. Since its inception, *Mūsų Pastogė* has given prominence to news concerning art exhibitions and artists' successes.

Both solo and group exhibitions are always enthusiastically supported and well attended by Lithuanian community members who give moral as well as financial support to artists. Particularly high esteem has been accorded artists such as Ratas, Šimkūnas, Urbonas and Vaičaitis, who, in addition to producing works of art, have also written authoritatively on matters of art.

Decorative folk-art items, and to a lesser extent paintings, feature prominently in the homes of most Lithuanians in Australia, providing nostalgic reminders of homeland and cultural legacy. The more easily affordable folk-art items are given frequently as gifts. Even though paintings are more expensive and migrant families have had heavy personal and community financial commitments, artist Leonas Urbonas believes that art purchases by Lithuanians are proportionately greater than those by Australians.⁸⁰⁷ In the early years, the preferred choices were nostalgic landscapes; more recently, abstract paintings have become popular. The criterion for purchase has always been personal enjoyment rather than financial investment as the notion of investment is totally foreign to the Lithuanian psyche.

For many years Lithuania had no free contact with the outside world. The Communist regime decreed absolutely what was permissible in art; artists were employed by the State and materials, style and subject matter were prescribed. Only Socialist Realism glorifying the Party and portraying 'happy' Soviet citizens was acceptable. Even slight deviation from this prescription was likely to have serious consequences.

Only from the sixties did communication with the outside world become gradually possible. After a decade or so, during which letters were exchanged between relatives and friends in Australia and Lithuania, in 1975 the author gained permission from Soviet authorities to stage a public art exhibition in Vilnius. Despite opposition from conservative members of the Sydney Lithuanian community, Kazokas travelled to Lithuania with a collection of graphic works by Vaclovas Ratas. These were framed and exhibited at the State Gallery in Vilnius in August, 1975. Very little official publicity was given,⁸⁰⁸ but news of the exhibition spread by word of mouth and attendance was pleasing.

About the same time, painter Adomas Vingis raised money in Melbourne for the purchase of a number of contemporary graphic art reproductions and illustrated art books which were smuggled by various means to Lithuania.

⁸⁰⁷ As told on several occasions to the author by Leonas Urbonas.

⁸⁰⁸ The only official publicity appeared after the exhibition had closed.

During the eighties, with the easing of political censorship in Lithuania, art forms became less rigid, but it was not until 1990, following the regaining of Lithuania's independence, that the extent and severity of art stagnation in Lithuania became fully apparent.

A more recent development has been the efforts by artists to free art in Lithuania from the shackles of Socialist Realism. Results are already becoming visible: in 1992 an exhibition of graphic art from Lithuania was held at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The works demonstrated clear signs that personal interpretations of life and events are rapidly replacing the former programmes prescribed by the Soviets. The exhibition is further evidence of the strong cultural bridge extending from Australia to Lithuania. Lithuanian artists in Australia will no doubt continue to play an important part in increasing communication and understanding between Lithuania and Australia.

Although most Lithuanian artists are keenly interested in the artistic happenings in Lithuania, their principal concern is to continue to work on the Australian art scene. Since their arrival Lithuanian artists, in the same way as artists from other countries, have worked inconspicuously and without a spokesperson or a leader. Bernard Smith writes:

... the post-war migrant artists did not establish themselves as leaders of *avant-garde* movements. Leadership remained with the native-born but the migrant artists did much to change the climate of aesthetic opinion during the 1950s and 1960s. By taking up teaching posts at many levels -- in general education, in public and private art schools, in adult education -- they were able to educate a generation of Australians towards a more tolerant view of modern art, particularly abstract art'.⁸⁰⁹

Finally, perhaps it is possible to say that Lithuanian artists brought to Australia their cultural heritage but gained artistic maturity here. At the same time, Australia has gained a number of Lithuanian artists who, together with other migrant artists, have added a unique element to the cultural diversity that now exists in this country.

⁸⁰⁹ Smith, *Australian Painting*, Melbourne, 1971, p. 390

APPENDIX

SELECT LIST OF ARTISTS' EXHIBITIONS AND AWARDS

ROSEMARY ALIUKONIS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1974 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1985 Greenhill Galleries, Adelaide

JOINT EXHIBITION

- 1972 Contemporary Art Society Gallery, Adelaide (with Glenn Ash)

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1972 South Australian Contemporary Art Society Interstate
 Travelling Exhibition
 Royal South Australian Society of Arts Painting Exhibition.
 1973 Arts Festival Centre Opening, Adelaide
 1974 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Adelaide
 1975 International Women's Year Exhibition:
 Royal South Australian Society of Arts Gallery, Adelaide,
 and Galerie Schecke, Hamburg, Germany
 1977 SKA Radio Station *Life* Exhibition, Festival Centre, Adelaide
 1982 *War Babies*, Kensington Gallery, Adelaide
 1983 *Illustrators '83*, Kintore Gallery, Adelaide
 1986 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1988 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Adelaide

DALIA ANTANAITIS

SOLO EXHIBITION

- 1991 Swanston Street Gallery, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Student Exhibition
 1990 *Disclosures* Exhibition, Melbourne
In-tension Exhibition, Melbourne
 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney

AWARDS

- 1990 V and G Kazokas Sculpture Prize
 RMIT Union Arts Grant

IONAS BALSAITIS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (all at the Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne)

- 1970 *Image of Mind* painting series
 1972 *Metron* painting series
 1975 *Processed Process*: film
 1976 Drawings
 1977 *Space Time Structures*: film
 1978 *Artists in Schools* Painting Exhibition
 1981 Paintings
 1982 *Erratica*: film
 1985 Paintings
 1988 Paintings
 1989 Etchings
 1990 Paintings

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 *Recent Australian Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1975 *Artist Artists*, National Gallery of Victoria
 1976 *Project 9* (documentary film & video), Art Gallery of
 New South Wales *Innovation in Australian Film*, Australian
 Film Commission *Drawing Some Definitions*, George Paton
 Galleries, Melbourne, and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
 1978 *Pinacotheca at Watters*, Watters Gallery, Sydney
 1980 *Preston to Phillip*, Reconnaissance Gallery, Melbourne
 1982 *Seven Artists*, National Gallery of Victoria
 1986 *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, Hobart

REPRESENTED IN

National Gallery of Victoria
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 National Film Library, Canberra
 Australian Film Institute, Vincent Library
 Australian Film Commission
 Parliament House, Canberra

JUOZAS BAUKUS (JOSEPH BANKS)**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 1949 - Bathurst Migrant Reception Camp
 1962 - St. John's Hall, East Melbourne
 1972 - Geographic Institute Hall, Brisbane
 1983 - Lithuanian House, Sydney
 1984 - Lithuanian House, Adelaide

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Since 1963 - Regular contributor to Victorian Artists Society Exhibitions
 Since 1980 - Regular contributor to Lithuanian Days Exhibitions

PAUL CLEVELAND**TELEVISION DRAMA SET AND COSTUME DESIGN**

- 1961 *The Rivals*
 1964 *Martin Luther*
 1966 *Phoenix Too Frequent*
 1967 *Ride on a Big Dipper*
 1977 *Catspaw*
 1980 *Patchwork Hero*
 1981 *Come Midnight Monday*
 1986 *Fame and Misfortune*
 1988 *The Bartons*
 1989 *House Rules*
 Inside Running

TELEVISION DRAMA COSTUME DESIGN

- 1980 *Lucinda Brayford*
 1985 *One Summer Again*
 1991 *Embassy*

CHILDREN'S FANTASY TELEVISION SET DESIGN

- 1967-1972 *Adventure Island*

TELEVISION VARIETY PROGRAMME SET DESIGN

- 1962 *The Gershwin Years*
 Circus on Ice
 1963 *Arabian Ice Show*
 Beauty and the Beast
 1963-1964 *The World of Operetta*
 1968 *Johnny Hartman Show*

- 1972 *The Kamahl Show*
 1976 *The Perry Como Show*
Ginger Rogers Show

TELEVISION OPERA PRODUCTION DESIGN

- 1961 *Secret of Susannah*
 1962 *La Serva Padrona*
 1964 *Martha*
 1969 *The Marriage Contract*

TELEVISION BALLET PRODUCTION DESIGN

- 1962 *Swan Lake*
Bolga
 1963 *The Sentimental Bloke*
Peer Gynt

STAGE OPERA SET DESIGN

- 1969 *Orpheus and Eurydice*
Secret Marriage
 1971 *Cossi Fan Tutte*
Secret of Susannah

SIGITAS GABRIE

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 Ewing Gallery, University of Melbourne
 1975, 1976, 1977,
 1981 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1974 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
 1975 19th Tasmanian Art Gallery Purchase Competition, Hobart
Four Painters, Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
Spring Festival of Drawing, Mornington Peninsula Arts
 Centre
 1976 *Australian Printmakers*, Print Council of Australia
 1977 *The Money Show*, Ewing Gallery, University of Melbourne
 1978 Mildura Sculpture Triennial
 LaTrobe University Sculpture Festival
 Stuart Gerstman Galleries, Melbourne
 Mitchell Foundation Exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria
 1981 First Australian Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne
 1988 *Contemporary Art Spaces Exhibition*, Chameleon Gallery,
 Hobart
Exile Artists' Exhibition, Lithuanian National Art Gallery,
 Vilnius, Lithuania
Outgrowing Assimilation? Centre for the Arts Gallery,
 Hobart
 1990 *Backyards and Beyond*, Irving Benson Gallery, La Trobe
 Library, Melbourne

AWARDS

- 1978 Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre Print Prize
 1979 Herrn Worland Print Prize, Warrnambool

REPRESENTED IN

National Gallery, Canberra
 Monash University Collection
 Western Australian Institute of Technology
 Burwood State College
 Philip Morris Collection
 LaTrobe University Collection
 Visual Arts Board Collection
 Queensland Art Gallery

Frankston State College
 Mitchell Foundation Collection, National Gallery of Victoria
 National Bank Print Collection
 Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre Collection
 Vilnius State Gallery, Lithuania
 Australian Embassy, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
 Foreign Affairs Department, Canberra
 Parliament House, Canberra

JOLANTA JANAVIČIUS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (Overseas)

1970 International Ceramics Exhibition, Vallauris, France
 1972, 1976 International Ceramics Exhibition, Faenza, Italy
 1979 Sloane Street Gallery, London
 1980 Leisure Centre, Stevenage, England
 1984 Park Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (Australia)

1970 Helen McEwan Gallery, Sydney
 1972 Gallery 16, Sydney
 1973 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1974, 1975
 & 1976 Old Bakery Gallery, Sydney
 1977 Potters Gallery, Sydney
 1978 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
 1981 Kensington Gallery, Adelaide
 Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney
 1982 Bonython Gallery, Adelaide
 Gallery 176, Sydney
 1983 Sculpture Centre, Sydney
 1984 Manuka Gallery, Canberra
 Bloomfield Gallery, Sydney
 1985 Nerang Gallery, Surfers Paradise
 Cook's Hill Gallery, Newcastle

REPRESENTED IN

South Australian Art Gallery, Adelaide
 Von Bertouch Gallery, Newcastle
 Art Gallery of Rockhampton, Queensland
 International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy
 Collection of the Government of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

ADOLFAS JANKUS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1972 Hawthorn Gallery, Victoria
 1973 Southlands Shopping Centre, Melbourne
 1974 Open House Exhibition, Melbourne

JOINT EXHIBITION

1972 Golden Age Gallery, Brighton, Victoria (with painter
 Angela Tucker)

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Since 1969 Regular exhibitor: Victorian Artists Society Exhibitions;
 Lithuanian Days Exhibitions; and
Herald Outdoor Art Shows
 1970 Toorak Gallery, Melbourne

IRENA JOKUBAUSKAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1976 Lithuanian House, Adelaide
 1985, 1988 Lithuanian House, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1973 Victorian Art Society Exhibition, North Melbourne Gallery
 1977 Ethnic Festival of Arts Exhibition, Melbourne
 1982 Bright (Vic.) Painting Exhibition
 1983 Altona Hoechst Art Competition
 Grampians Painting Safari Exhibition
 1986 Altona Rotary Club Art Competition, Melbourne
 1988 Paynesville Craggs Safari Exhibition

AWARDS

- Ethnic Festival of Arts Exhibition

VINCAS JOMANTAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1967, 1974
 & 1976 Rudy Komon Gallery, Sydney
 1976 Crossley Gallery, Melbourne
 1982 *Retrospective 1962-1982*, Royal Melbourne Institute
 of Technology Gallery, Melbourne
 1990 *Vincas Jomantas: Sculpture*, McClelland Gallery, Melbourne

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1956 Contemporary Art Society Exhibition, Melbourne
 1957 Peter Bray Gallery, Melbourne
 1958 Brummel Gallery, Melbourne
Survey I, National Gallery of Victoria
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Second Lithuanian Art Exhibition, Melbourne
 1959 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
Six Sculptors Exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria
 1961 Mildura Sculpture Exhibition
 Commonwealth Exhibition, Musee Rodin, Paris
 1963 Newcastle City Art Gallery
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 1964 Hungry Horse Gallery, Sydney
 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Commonwealth Travelling Sculpture Exhibition
 1965 Centre 5, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Young Australian Painters Commonwealth Exhibition, Tokyo
 Georges Gallery, Melbourne
 1966 Victorian Sculptors Society Exhibition
 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1968 Commonwealth Travelling Exhibition, New Zealand
 Baltic Art Exhibition, White Studio Gallery, Adelaide
 1972 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1973 *The Cairnmiller Institute*, Georges Gallery, Melbourne
 Centre 5, Geelong Art Gallery
 Centre 5, McClelland Gallery, Melbourne
 1979 Rudy Komon Gallery, Sydney
 1984 Centre 5, Heide Gallery, Melbourne
 1987 *Third Australian Sculpture Triennial*, Mildura
Contemporary Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery;
 National Gallery of Victoria, Saitama, Japan

AWARDS

- 1964 Mildura Sculpture Triennial Award
 1968 Comalco Award for Sculpture

REPRESENTED IN

Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Newcastle City Art Gallery
 Mildura Art Gallery
 McClelland Art Gallery, Melbourne

COMMISSIONS

Australian National University, Canberra: Outdoor Sculpture (bronze), Physics Building courtyard; Wall Sculpture (wood), Forestry School.
 Monash University, Clayton, Victoria: Designed Walls (concrete), Alexander Theatre auditorium.
 Australian Chancery, Washington DC, USA: Sculptural Screen (aluminium).
 State Government Offices, Melbourne; Coat of Arms (aluminium).
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Two Screens (aluminium).
 Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney: Free-standing Sculpture (Stainless steel).
 Eagle House, Melbourne: Wall Sculpture (aluminium).
 Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand: Free-standing Sculpture (bronze).

VIDA KABAILA**SOLO EXHIBITION**

1980 Curlionis Art Gallery, Chicago

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1957 *Spring Exhibition*, Victorian Artists Society, Melbourne
Herald Outdoor Art Show, Melbourne
 1958 *Lithuanian Artists in Australia*, Melbourne
 1959, 1960
 & 1962 *Herald* Outdoor Art Show, Melbourne
 1964 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Melbourne
 1967, 1968 Hunters Hill Exhibition, Sydney
 1978 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney
 1984 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Canberra
 1988 *Lithuanian Artists Abroad* Exhibition, Vilnius, Lithuania

VYTAS KAPOČIŪNAS**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

1963 Lithuanian House, Adelaide
 1965, 1966 North Adelaide Galleries
 1967 Ansdell Gallery, London
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1968 Nundah Gallery, Canberra
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1969 Munster Arms Gallery, Melbourne
 Man Yung Gallery, Melbourne
 North Adelaide Galleries
 1970 Derek Hunt Galleries, Perth
 1973 Llewellyn Galleries, Adelaide
 1975 Osborne Art Gallery, Adelaide
 1980 Contemporary Art Society Exhibition, Adelaide

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Between 1965 and 1977 participated in Group Exhibitions at the following galleries:

Art Gallery of South Australia
 Art Gallery of Victoria

North Adelaide Galleries
 Hamilton Gallery, Victoria
 Mercury Gallery, London
 Tasmanian Art Gallery
 Osborne Art Gallery
 Llewellyn Art Gallery
 Lidums Gallery, South Australia
 Print Council of Australia
 Horizon '72 Te Awamutu Festival, New Zealand
 Albury Art Gallery
 Newcastle City Art Centre
 Contemporary Art Society of South Australia
 Alice Springs Art Foundation
 Royal South Australian Society of Artists Exhibition
 Playhouse Gallery, Festival Centre, Adelaide
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Bonython-Meadmore Galleries, Adelaide
 Elder Fine Art Galleries, South Australia
 Tynte Gallery, South Australia

GRAŽINA KATAUSKAS

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1979, 1980 *Collection of Knots*, Macrame Association of Canberra
 Exhibition, Canberra Theatre Gallery
 1981, 1982 *The Originals*, Macrame Association of Canberra, A.C.T. Craft
 Centre, Canberra
 1982 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Melbourne
 1983, 1984 Macrame and Fibrecraft Exhibition, Strathairn Gallery,
 Canberra
 1984 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Canberra
 1986, 1992 Lithuanian Days Exhibition, Sydney

DIANNE KERAITIS

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1968, 1969 Christmas Invitation Exhibition, Blaxland Galleries, Sydney
 1969 London Gallery, Queenbeyan
Survey 9, Blaxland Galleries, Sydney
 1970 Currabubula Art Prize Exhibition
 1975 Drummoyne Municipal Art Society Exhibition
 1983 Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
 1984 Robin Hood Art Competition, Sydney

AWARDS

- 1970 Currabubula Art Prize, NSW
 1975 Drummoyne Exhibition Prize, Sydney
 1984 Robin Hood Art Competition, Sydney

DANIUS KESMINAS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS, SITE WORKS AND INSTALLATIONS

- 1988 *Fire Sculpture*, Park Street, Abbotsford, Melbourne
 1989 *Romas Kalanta Memorial Fire Sculpture*, Collingwood,
 Melbourne
 1990 Painting and Sculpture Exhibition, Gold Street Gallery,
 Melbourne
 1991 *Fire Line*, Fire Sculpture, Vilnius, Lithuania
New York Consequence, Fire Sculpture, New York
Postcards: A Travelogue, Gold Street Gallery, Melbourne
Incendiary, Fire Sculpture, Carlton, Melbourne